OLD WESTLAND

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A Story of the Golden West Coast
of the South Island of New Zealand
Known to the Maori as
TE WAI POUNAMU
(The Waters (or place) of Greenstone)

by

E. IVEAGH LORD

With an Introduction by

Colonel The Honourable Mr. Justice NORTHCROFT
D.S.O., V.D.

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DEDICATION

OLD WESTLAND is dedicated to the memory of my Father and Mother, Edward Iveagh and Ellen Lord, and to my Aunt Francis Trim —who lives among us yet. Pioneers of the West Coast of the South Island of New Zealand, they saw Old Westland at the zenith of its golden glory—when in the years of its first decade it yielded over 3,000,000 ounces of gold —adding (when most needed) £12,000,000 to the wealth of the then infant Colony.

My people, in common with their fellow Pioneers, suffered many hardships and privations, of which they often told me, and in so doing inspired the writing of this work, wherein it has been my constant endeavour, to place upon permanent record, at least some of the wonderful achievements of the sterling men and women who pioneered Old Westland.

Greymouth,
Christmas, 1939.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THE AUTHOR, with a deep sense of appreciation, has pleasure in acknowledging the valuable and kindly assistance, so readily given during the preparation of this work, by the following gentlemen:

The late Mr. William Wilson of Hokitika, a student of West Coast History, who passed on shortly after the commencement of this story. Dr. William McKay, Greymouth, an outstanding authority on Old Westland, who, apart from supplying the most valuable and interesting data, has been most helpful in the compilation of this volume. Mr. Martin Nestor, Assistant Secretary, National Historical Committee, Wellington, who also placed at my disposal information of the greatest importance which has enabled me to correct many errors that had crept into the story of the Province. Mr. D. J. Evans, Honorary Secretary, Westland Provincial Centennial Council, Hokitika, who has been untiring in his efforts to procure records and photographs pertaining to Westland as it was in the beginning.

INTRODUCTION

WESTLAND is a land of contrasts. Wild rocky mountains lie reflected in placid lakes nestled in dense forest. The forests themselves, profuse in growth suggestive of tropical jungle, reach up and give welcome embrace to encroaching glaciers. As with its natural features so with its people. To-day they are a quiet industrious community—only yesterday they were a turbulent race of milling, struggling adventurers risking everything, even life itself, in the mad rushes of its goldfields. As with its features and its people so with the regard of those who consider it. To those who do not know it and take it upon hearsay it is a desolate district of perpetual rain. To those who have seen it occasionally in its brighter moods it is an area of attractive bush backed by rugged mountains and with some spectacular glaciers which it shows for profit to spendthrift tourists. But to those who are of it and who love it Westland is a country of extraordinary beauty. These know its glorious wooded valleys, its forest-fringed lakes, its sweeping beaches, noble rivers and majestic mountains. These know that despite its rains it has more than its share of sunshine and sparkling, brilliant days. These know the beauties of its dawnings and its sunsets.

To one minded to write of Westland, especially to one nurtured among its beauties and reared in its atmosphere of wild romance, a difficult choice of subject presents itself. The author of this history has escaped that dilemma. As part of the scheme to mark the centenary of New Zealand the people of Westland, like other communities throughout the country, have decided to have written the history of their district. To Mr. Lord, a native and therefore a lover of Westland, was entrusted the task. Feeling, perhaps, that he was too near contemporary events he has limited his work to Old Westland.

He is obviously a diligent searcher of old records and has presented his collection in convenient and orderly arrangement. Thus we find in historical sequence the traditional Maori accounts of the aboriginal discovery and settlement of this West Coast of the South Island; then the first European approaches to these shores by Tasman and later and more intimately by Cook. Following the discovery by the latter of the excellent harbours of the West Coast Sounds and the presence there of seals in large numbers came the sealers who, with the whalers in other parts, were the first traders to New Zealand. Then our author tells the thrilling and at times the tragic story of those brave men who explored this difficult and unknown locality. And then by way of climax he tells us with much graphic detail of the spacious and adven-

turous period when, gold having been discovered, many thousands of men came from other parts of New Zealand, from Australia, from America, from different parts of Europe, and even from China to dig for the precious metal. That was indeed a thrilling episode in the history of the district and it leaves a romantic memory throughout the West Coast peopled now for the most part by the children and grandchildren of those hardy gold-seeking pioneers. Most of us even of this present generation have vivid recollections of the aftermath of the gold rushes of the sixties, of decaying mining hamlets now entirely disappeared but which so recently had been the centre of activities of thousands of miners. With a touch of the dramatic Mr. Lord carries his history of Old Westland only to this period and leaves to our imagination or to our memories the decline as rapid as had been the rushing torrent of incoming gold seekers. Thus is presented a complete and satisfying picture of Old Westland — the task to which the author addressed himself.

This book introduces us to many interesting persons who took part in these stirring events. Of this period much has been written in a scattered and desultory way by different writers. It is not too much to hope that we may still have another book upon Old Westland wherein will be collected more intimate and detailed stories of these explorers, administrators and miners. Nor of these alone. Among those who

remained and became its local governors, its pioneer cattle men, its coach drivers, among all those who helped to establish the West Coast, including the great Seddon himself, were men, big and adventurous, whose personalities and the incidents of whose lives are as worthy and as necessary of permanent recording as those described by Mr. Lord.

To those of us who claim Westland as our own land whether by birth or by adoption it is a matter of no little satisfaction to have this record of its romantic origin. The West Coast did certainly decline in the number of its people after the first mad rush of the miners had spent itself. Yet was there no decline in the character of its people. The miners were a vigorous and manly breed of men. Their code was simple—courage, generosity and honesty were the cardinal virtues. Bad men as well as good poured in with the human torrent, but the vicious were unsuited to the conditions and were the first to depart. So it came about that as the tide of population receded Westland was left with as fine a stock as the most discriminating colonisers could wish. The district gradually added to its attenuated mining the natural industries of timber milling and farming. The adventurous gold miners and their no less adventurous wives set about making permanent homes for themselves and their children. Dense forests were invaded and clearings became farms. As time went on, with timber getting

in some localities, coal mining in others, and scattered farms everywhere, the countryside acquired an atmosphere of permanent settlement. The mushroom cities with their numerous saloons and stores settled down into homely townships. Thus was Old Westland of which Mr. Lord has written changed into the Westland as we know it to-day. Nor has the quickening touch of gold quite forsaken it. Gone are the individual diggings, but huge dredges and other modern methods are employed in taking large quantities of gold from areas too slightly endowed for the cruder methods of the old days.

With this change in the outward condition of the West Coast it is inevitable that there should be a gradual change in its people. Those of us who were privileged to know the vanguard of that brave army of miners cherish memories of their simple virtues. Above all were they brave in adversity—friendly and hospitable—generous in deed and thought, and in all places and at all times honest and trustworthy. These were the qualities they left as a heritage, and despite the gradual changes which have overtaken the outward condition of the West Coasters and despite—indeed because of—its long period of isolation, these are the qualities still to be found by those who return and move about with sympathy and understanding.

E. H. NORTHCROFT.

Christchurch,
November, 1939.

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CHAPTER I

Maori Mythology—The Coming of Ngahue—Pounamu (Greenstone)—First Human Occupation—Maori Occupation.

OLD WESTLAND'S history begins, according to Maori mythology, in the dawn days of the world when the Chief Ngahue landed there and discovered deposits of pounamu (greenstone) in the waters of its rivers. Ngahue, a great and daring navigator, like unto our own Captain Cook, was (so the legend runs) driven from the cradle lands of his people—from Hawaiki—by a woman (Hine-tu-a-hoanga) who invoked the aid of a great green sea-monster—Poutini—to capture him. He, however, boldly put out to sea in his fast sailing canoe, and though hotly pursued, held ever onward until on the far horizon he saw a long white cloud which proved to be land—thus did he "find in the sea," these islands of Aotea-roa. As he drew still nearer he saw a stupendous mountain beckoning to him, and this he made out to be Aorangi, the mighty monarch of the Southern Alps. Aorangi com-

manded him to proceed north, and "with the shining orb of the sun to guide him by day, and the silvery moon to pilot him by night," he at length arrived off the mouth of the Arahura River on the West Coast of the South Island, some four miles north of where Hokitika now stands. At this moment the sun hid its face, and lo, all was dark, save that from the icefields of Tara-o-Tama, at the source of the Arahura River, there gleamed a bright radiance, and by this omen Ngahue knew that he was to land and proceed thereto.

Poutini, still in hot pursuit, followed him up the river, until a deep pool at the foot of a fearful rapid was reached. Here it injured itself and sank to the bottom, being, by the peculiar qualities of the water, transformed into a greenstone canoe, and there it may be seen to this very day, if you find the right place and dive to the bottom of the pool. As this is very dark and very deep, the canoe can only be seen when the sun shines brightly at high noon, through a cleft in the cliffs. . . . .

His enemy having been disposed of, Ngahue, greatly attracted by the beauty and hardness of the greenstone lying about the pool, selected a block which his warriors conveyed back to his canoe at the mouth of the river. On his arrival there the sky to the south and west became as dark as night—while to the north all was bright and shining. By this he knew it was safe to return to his home land, so he

sailed north, and after visiting Tauranga, went direct to Hawaiki, taking with him the block of greenstone.

On his arrival he found his people were at war, but after he had reported that he had found in the sea a land where there were moa and pounamu in great abundance, many of them, tired of strife, decided to migrate thereto. So from the block of greenstone, which was known as "the fish of Ngahue," two sharp axes were made. These were called Tutauru and Hau-hau-te-rangi, and with them seven huge totara trees were felled and hewn into canoes, which were named Arawa, Tainui, Matatua, Takitumu, Kura-hau-po, Toko-maru, and Matuwhaorua, and they comprised the first fleet of canoes which reached these shores, the cause of whose arrival, and of the arrival of the canoes which came afterwards, being the fact that Ngahue discovered greenstone in Old Westland.

It is worthy of note that Maori mythology, as propounded by the various tribes, does not agree in all respects, but reference to Sir George Grey's interesting work, entitled "Polynesian Mythology, and Ancient Traditional History of the New Zealanders," will show that the principal points in the foregoing legend, and the traditional account of the discovery of Aotea-roa agree. Further, that the statement that the Maori migration to New Zealand was

due to the discovery of greenstone by Ngahue in Westland is common to both.

H. D. Skinner, Otago University Museum, in a paper entitled "New Zealand Greenstone," read before the Otago Institute, October, 1932, and later reprinted from "The Transactions of the Royal Society of New Zealand," Vol. 65, 1935, under the heading of Maori Myths Relating to the Origin of Greenstone, makes the following interesting observations: "The myth relating to Ngahue and his connection with greenstone has been collected from various Maori tribes, and each account has variations of its own. The following appear to be the most important points: Hine-tu-a-hoanga (Lady of the Grindstone, personification of the grindstone) was antagonistic to Poutini (personification of greenstone); Poutini belonged to Ngahue, and lived in Hawaiki; Ngahue fled overseas with his "fish," as the Maoris described greenstone. One version states that he rode his fish. They reached Tuhua Island in the Bay of Plenty, an island which yields the best quantities of obsidian and has given its name to that material. Thence they were driven by the Lady of the Grindstone. Quarrels between Poutini, on the one hand, and Waiapu (a stone used in making adzes), and Mataa (flint) are recorded, and finally Ngahue fled to the West Coast of the South Island and hid Poutini in the bed of the Arahura. Ngahue tore off the side of his fish

and took it back to Hawaiki, where it was made into pendants and adzes. The latter were used in hewing out the Arawa canoe. By a number of writers Ngahue has been regarded as an historical character, and New Zealand school children are taught to regard him as one of the discoverers of New Zealand."

The same writer further observes: "Another myth of the greenstone centres round Tama-ahua, whose wives were abducted by Poutini (greenstone). In his pursuit of them Tama was guided by a magic dart which led him to the Arahura River. Here he found his wives Hina-ahuka (syn. kahurangi), Hina-aotea, and Hina-kawakawa. These are all names of varieties of greenstone. S. Percy Smith, in 'History and Traditions of the Taranaki Coast,' was puzzled as to the interpretation of Tama-ahua's adventures in Westland, but he concludes a discussion of the point, page 23, as follows: 'Whatever we may think of the peculiar story of Tama-ahua, and his search for the precious stone, the journey of Tumuaki, on the same errand, is historic, as will be seen.' Tumuaki went from Taranaki to the Greenstone Country and found a boulder of pounamu. In breaking it up he struck his finger with the hammer. He thoughtlessly put his finger in his mouth, for which impious act he was turned into stone. His wife, Hine-tu-a-hoanga (Lady of the Grindstone, a name which we have already seen in a quite different

setting), went in search of him, but was drowned. Mr. Smith dated these events about 1550."

There are innumerable legends centred round the discovery of greenstone, the first cited here being the one most favoured by the Old West Coast natives. This event is of course of paramount importance in Maori history, and sufficient has been written to clearly show that Westland was ever the scene of activity, and that the stage was always set at the Arahura River.

From the foregoing it would appear that the Maoris were the first inhabitants. This is not so, for centuries before the coming of the Maori, let alone of the Pakeha, there was a human occupation of Westland of much greater antiquity. What manner of men were these, who, in a desperate endeavour to keep body and soul together on the meagre natural production of that wild land, hunted not for sport, but for food, the mighty moa, that gigantic wingless bird unique to New Zealand, and who, when successful, feasted to their hearts' content on the flesh thereof? Their struggle to subsist was heroic. True, native feathered game there was in great abundance, while the rivers teemed with fish of every description, and in season inanga (whitebait) ascended the streams in never-ending shoals. On certain beaches, too, there were seals in untold numbers, and a plenitude of shell-fish.

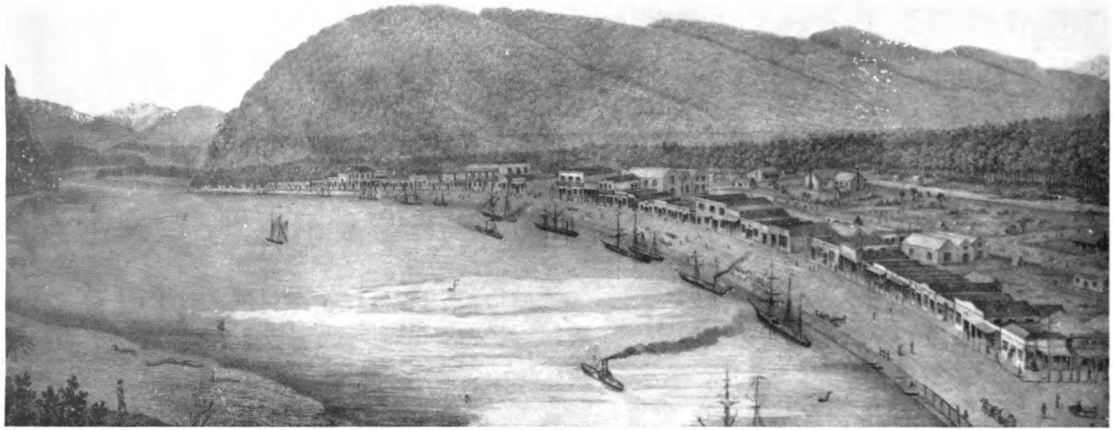
Two edible ferns were also found in certain localities, the mamakau and katote, the former growing only in soil of good quality, and not in the black birch forests. The natives considered the root of this, when cooked in a Maori oven, to be very good eating; it would sustain life well, particularly if an eel were added. The katote, on the other hand, which is found in the black birch country, is very bitter and seldom eaten except in the last extremity. There was little else in the way of food to be obtained, with the exception of a few berries in the autumn, and the heart of the nikau palm which is very tender and very satisfying, but only to be found close to the coast line.

But even these scanty necessities of life were not always available, many being seasonable, providing a feast or a famine. Then terrific storms would sweep the land, and the hunting and snaring of birds would be an impossibility, while heavy seas pounding the shores, and flooded rivers, would prevent the killing of seals and fishing. Fern root alone, even if procurable, would hardly keep body and soul together, and when these conditions prevailed —and they frequently must have—starvation stark and terrible faced these pre-historic people, who strove so heroically to subsist.

Yet, that there was such an occupation is certain. In this respect, A. J. Harrop, M.A., in "The Romance of Westland," states: "Though

the Maori occupation of Westland has been treated so far as though it were the first, there can be no doubt that the human occupation of New Zealand is of much greater antiquity than this. Discoveries have been made of stone implements far below the present level of the soil. The most careful and scientific description of such a discovery is given by Sir Julius von Haast. A partly finished chert adze and its sandstone sharpener were found by a party of gold miners at Bruce Bay, South Westland, a few days before he arrived on the spot in 1868. The implements were lying on a floor of pebble-studded clay, and more than fourteen feet of strata of humus, sand and shingle had to be cut through before they were reached. Totara trees four feet in diameter had to be felled before the surface could be broken; there were also huge trunks that had been prostrate for generations, and moss grown moulds of others that had decayed centuries before. The place was five hundred feet above high water mark, with the usual three belts of driftwood sand without vegetation, rush-and-manuka-covered sand, and low scrub. It had clearly passed through these three stages, and its foot of humus must have taken many generations if not centuries of herbage to form before the forest giants could root themselves in it. The various accumulations and the ancient growth of the forest belt take us back undoubtedly several thousand years, and even then we have

The Mawhera Pa, Greymouth, where the Deed of Purchase was signed in 1860



Greymouth, 1866. Known as the Crescent City, lying as it did some two miles along water front to the Mawhera Pa. No wharf existing, vessels were moored to stumps on river bank.

a neolithic race that polished its weapons and had spread so far west and south to the long uninhabited sounds."

It is of great interest to note that apart from the discovery of this chert adze and its sandstone sharpener, it has now been established that greenstone was known to the moa-hunters, the first inhabitants, and also to the Morioris, who it would seem were the predecessors of the Maoris. Of the former very little is known —they have not survived as a separate race; being inferior in fighting qualities to the latter they were probably killed or absorbed by the various tribes.

Coming now to the Maori occupation of Westland, it has been noted that they were not numerous in the South Island, which they knew as Te Wai Pounamu (the waters, or place, of greenstone), and Westland was no exception to the rule. Greenstone (pounamu), a variety of jade, known as nephrite, was greatly prized, and as it is only found in Westland, many raiding parties set out in search of it, and much blood was shed in the tribal wars which were fought for its possession. Carrying, after long and tedious treatment, a good cutting edge, chisels for carving, adzes for canoe work, as well as ornaments and implements of war, were made from it.

The Maori lived in the stone age, and had no knowledge of iron or metals of any sort;

therefore greenstone was the best known substitute, for, apart from its beauty, it was very hard and durable. The pa at the mouth of the Arahura River, "in the heart of the greenstone country" (where Ngahue landed in the dawn days of the world), was the principal storehouse of this coveted commodity, and in consequence was attacked many times by raiders. When these raids occurred or even when the Maoris first came to Westland are moot points. Authorities differ, but from what can be learned of a people who knew not writing in any shape or form, it would seem that about the year 1300 the Ngatiwairangi tribe crossed over from the North to the South Island, settling down at West Wanganui, some miles north of Karamea. Here they resided in peace for about two hundred and fifty years, spreading as far south as Milford Sound. During this time they were practically a lost tribe, though there must have been some connection with the North Island, as greenstone gradually made its appearance there. In their isolation they became wonderfully efficient at grinding this hard and beautiful stone, and were a happy and a contented people. But, alas, history then repeated itself, for even as a woman had been the cause of driving Ngahue from the cradle lands of his people, which led to his discovery of greenstone, so was a woman, again through the same agency, the cause of the downfall of the Ngatiwairangi tribe. It so

happened that the powerful northern tribe Ngai-Tahu, had completed the invasion of the East Coast of the South Island as far south as the Waitaki River, and were in occupation of the conquered territory. One day when some of the tribe were building a canoe, a strange woman named Raureka appeared among them who ridiculed the tools they were using, showing them some greenstone ones which were much superior. The Ngai-Tahu men were greatly impressed with these and persuaded her to lead them to her country, that they too might become possessed of such splendid implements. This she did and much trading took place between the two tribes. Greenstone was exchanged for foodstuffs, for mutton birds, kumara, and fish of every description, and for some considerable time all went well. The Ngai-Tahu made many trips across the island, travelling by way of all the alpine passes, which were well known to the Maori hundreds of years before the advent of the Pakeha. At length war broke out between the two tribes and the Ngatiwairangi were heavily defeated, the Ngai-Tahu, after looting the Arahura Pa, returning to the East Coast. A few years later the Ngai-Tahu again raided Westland, but this time the resident tribe were prepared and ambushed them, killing many and driving the rest off. To avenge this the Ngai-Tahu got together a large force which set out to conquer the Westland

natives, whom they annihilated, embodying their women and children into their own people. Thus the natives who lived in Westland for over two hundred years ceased to exist as a separate tribe and were replaced by the Ngai-Tahu, the descendants of whom still reside at the Arahura.

The next event of outstanding interest occurred when the Ngati-tama, Ati-Awa and Ngati-rarua tribes, under the leadership of Niho, made their historic raid on the greenstone country (1828). Te Rauparaha in this year had invaded the East Coast and a section of his tribe set out for Westland by the coastal route. They believed there was a great store of greenstone at the Arahura and though they duly reached their objective they failed to obtain the pounamu. During this raid, Tuhuru (father of Werita Tainui) was captured. He, however, was ransomed for a very famous mere—kaikanohi. From the Arahura most of the raiders returned to the Mawhera Pa, Greymouth. Eight years later, Te Puoho led another war party from Golden Bay and proceeded still further south, destroying as they went. They, however, met their Waterloo at the Mataura River, where the Maoris of those parts, armed by the early sealers with the dreaded musket —as also were the raiders—killed two of them and made prisoner all the rest with the exception of one man, who made his way back to Golden Bay.

Chapter II

Tarapuhi — Werita Tainui — The Mawhera Pa — Abel Janszoon Tasman, 1642—Captain James Cook, 1770.

As has been shown the principal pas in Old Westland were those at the Arahura and Mawhera (Grey) Rivers. Of the latter, Sir Arthur Dudley Dobson, a pioneer surveyor of Westland, in "Reminiscences," says: "There had been a good sized pa on the north side of the river where we were camped, but it had been destroyed and burnt by a war party from Kaikoura many years ago, and of the inhabitants many were killed. The greater number had escaped, however, but the pa had never since been occupied. So far as I could learn this was the last war party that had attacked the Mawhera Pa. The Kaikoura men destroyed all the canoes they could find, hoping to prevent the Coast men from following them. They took all the greenstone they could lay their hands on, retreated up the Grey River, and camped on the high ground near the junction of the Ahaura with the Mawhera, where I subsequently laid out the township of Ahaura. Thinking the Coast men would not be able to follow them quickly without canoes, they were unprepared and not expecting any attack.

They had encamped on the edge of a high cliff, with a deep gully running into the land on the east side, and thought themselves in a safe position, as they could be attacked only on two sides. In this, however, they were mistaken, for the Coast men soon avenged themselves. Collecting a strong force from the Maoris living south of the Grey, they quickly manned the canoes, which had been hidden away in the forest, went up the river at night, and at dawn attacked the sleeping Kaikoura warriors. They were soon over-powered, some being killed, while others jumped off the cliff and were drowned, leaving the Coast men once more in possession of the greenstone and the canoes. The captives provided the customary feast, which lasted some days; then the victors returned to the Coast. The pa on the north side of the river was never rebuilt, a new one on the south side being in use when I arrived on the scene. The fight must have taken place about 1790 to 1800, as the narrator, who was a very old man, said it happened when he was quite a small boy, his mother having carried him away into the bush, and thus they escaped. The Coast natives apparently kept a few prisoners for a time, as the last was said to have been killed and eaten on the island in Lake Brunner."

Of Tarapuhi, chief of the Mawhera Pa, the same author writes: "Tarapuhi was the most important chief on the West Coast in the

sixties. He was far too important and of too high lineage to do any manual work. He might steer a canoe, but not carry a swag, and he always had two or three young men in attendance on him. He had a great reputation as an athlete and warrior, was over six feet in height, and a very well made muscular man of handsome countenance. I had no means of judging what his age was, but I should think that in 1864 he was probably about 70 years old, though very active and strong. His old wife, Mame, was always about with him, filling his pipe and brushing off the sandflies and mosquitoes, and always by his side in the whare. He died at Greymouth in April, 1864, while I was in Christchurch. He left Mame several important messages, which she was to give to me as soon as I returned. I found her in great grief at the loss of her husband. She said life was not worth living without Tarapuhi—he was the finest man in the world, and that she was only waiting for my return to give me his dying instructions. Then she would depart also. She then retired to the little whare which had been built for her to die in, refused all food, rolled herself up in her mats and blankets, and in a few days passed on."

W. H. S. Hindmarsh, "Waratah," who reached Old Westland in 1866, in "Tales of the Golden West," devotes a chapter to Werita Tainui, brother of Tarapuhi, which contains much of great interest, and Tainui's own story

of the days before the coming of the Pakeha. This was translated from the Maori by John Greenwood, Native Agent at Greymouth, an accomplished Maori scholar, who had accompanied Bishop Selwyn on many of his historical journeys, thus gaining a wonderful knowledge of the language and customs of the Maori people. "Waratah" states: "Tainui was a Maori chief of the highest aristocratic caste, a good natured fellow of medium height and weight, with a bright face, showing the high caste Maori. His cheeks and chin were scored with the orthodox curve markings. He had an abundance of hair on his head, and his half-closed eyes had a merry twinkle in them. Anyone looking at him calmly could not have associated him with any of the atrocities or orgies of a Maori warrior of the 'bad old days.' . . . . His was a noble and warlike ancestry dating back into the dark ages, for the name Tainui is associated with the first canoes to reach New Zealand."

Here follows Tainui's own story: "In old times long ago, the West Coast was thickly peopled from the Buller to Okarito by the powerful tribe of Ngatiwairangi. Now it came to pass that being inspired with a thirst for glory, certain war parties crossed the mountains and made descents on the settlements of the Ngai-Tahu, who dwelt about Port Cooper (Lyttelton) and the Canterbury Plains. When victorious they enjoyed the fruits of conquest

after preparing the same in Maori ovens. The Ngai-Tahu were not slow in returning the compliment, and thus an interchange of visits across the mountains was kept at the cost of much consumption of warriors; and many fights and great devastation ensued. In the long run the Port Cooper natives had the best of it, and the Ngatiwairangi were abolished, the land being occupied by five divisions of the Ngai-Tahu tribe. The original possessors of the Grey district were all wiped out by a war party under the leadership of my father, Tuhuru. I was only a little boy then. There was a great pa at the Ahaura. We attacked it and wasn't there a slaughter! Those who got away fled to that high mountain you see at the back, but bless you, they were soon hunted down and knocked on the head! My father was something like a man. If we had been able to draw likenesses as you are, there would have been something for the Pakeha to look at. He was square built and at least eight feet high. Talk of Mr. Revell*, pooh! He's a baby to him. However, he died, and his bones are in that cave along by my house (the Mawhera Pa). My elder brother, Tarapuhi, is buried there also, and I live in my corner under the hill, keeping watch over those great men, my ancestors, who lie buried in the cave close by."

In answer to a question how the war parties got across the mountains, Tainui said: "As for tracks for the war parties, they did without

* William Horton Revell, known as "Big" Revell, the outstanding personality of Old Westland's golden age.

them; they simply followed up the Mawhera or some other river to its source, and then popped over the saddle, and followed a stream flowing the other way."

A good, if grim story is told of Tainui who, as will be shown, was one of the chiefs who signed the "Deed of Sale of Westland." When his title was being investigated, he was asked how he acquired the land he claimed, to which he replied that "his claim was uncontestable," as he had eaten the former owner. The main thoroughfare running from Mawhera Quay to the southern boundary of Native Reserve 32, upon which the business portion of the town of Greymouth is built, perpetuates the name of Tainui. There is also a Werita Street and a Tarapuhi Street within the borough. Thus did John Rochfort when laying out Greymouth in 1865 honour the two last chiefs of the Mawhera Pa. Werita Tainui died at Greymouth and was buried with his ancestors under the hill. The Maoris after his death removed to the Arahura. Apart from the wars which were waged for greenstone, there were many petty disputes anent the right of taking native birds, kakapo, kiwi and weka in the Arahura, Hokitika, Grey and Buller districts. These disputes became more acute in the opening years of the 19th century, for at this time early sealing gangs were slaughtering these amphibious animals, which were to be found in their teeming thousands on certain beaches.

Tasman

In consequence of this a shortage of food was brought about, and tribal rights to have the sole occupation of certain localities for snaring purposes were jealously guarded and many minor clashes took place which led to some bloodshed, but as those concerned were few in number nothing very serious occurred. By 1838, however, the influence of the early missionaries was so great that from this date the natives, quick to learn, turned to more peaceful and profitable pursuits, and war was no more in Old Westland.

So much for mythology and conjecture. History tells us that Abel Janszoon Tasman, the famous Dutch navigator, discovered New Zealand, sighting the coast of Westland on December 13th, 1642, and it is this Province, therefore, that first stands sharply silhouetted on the horizon of Dominion history. Tasman quaintly described Westland as "a great land uplifted high, not unlike the island of Formosa with its piles of rugged mountains." Employed by the Dutch East India Company, who were seeking new lands wherein to establish trading stations, Tasman at this time was endeavouring to ascertain whether New Holland, as Australia was then called,

extended southward and formed a great Antarctic continent. He sailed from Batavia, on August 14th, 1642, in the *Heemskercq,* accompanied by the *Zeehaen* (the latter commanded by Gerritt Jansan), small vessels of 60 and 100 tons respectively. On November 24th of the same year he discovered and named Van Diemen's Land, which we now know as Tasmania. One week later, on December 1st, he anchored in Fredrick Hendrik's Bay (now Prince of Wales Bay), and took possession for Holland. Here he remained until December 9th, when he sailed east, and, as stated, picked up the coast of Westland four days later. He named the new country Staaten Land, as he considered it probably extended across the Pacific to what is now known as Staaten Island, south of Tierra del Fuego. Staaten Land, however, was soon afterwards proved by another explorer to be an island; thereupon the Dutch authorities changed the name of this country to New Zealand, though they did not reveal its existence to the world for some considerable time. Tasman sailed north along the West Coast until he rounded what we now call Farewell Spit, and anchored in what he called Murderers' (now Golden) Bay. Here the Maoris attacked a boat's crew and killed four of his men. He then sailed along the coast of the North Island (naming Cape Maria Van Diemen), until he rounded the North Cape, and on Epiphany Eve, some islets coming

under his observation, he with due regard to the religious significance of the date of their discovery, named them the Three Kings in honour of the Wise Men from the East. This was his last act before departing, for the appearance of another band of Maoris so terrified him that he finally sailed away from this country without having set foot hereon, within a month of having first sighted "a great land uplifted high"—the shores of Old Westland.

Of the one hundred and twenty-eight years immediately following Tasman's visit, nothing authentic is known of Westland's history. Then Captain James Cook, on the occasion of his first voyage round the world in H.M.S. *Endeavour,* sailed along its shores and, sighting Aorangi, gave his own illustrious name to the mighty monarch of the Southern Alps. Cook was not impressed with Westland, which he described as "an inhospitable shore, unworthy of observation, except for its ridge of naked and barren rocks covered with snow. As far as the eye could reach the prospect was wild, craggy and desolate."

Cook's voyage was brought about by the fact that the Royal Society, in anticipation of the transit of Venus in 1769, decided that it was essential to despatch a properly equipped vessel, in command of a competent officer, to the South Seas for observation purposes, Cook being selected to lead the expedition on account of being an acknowledged authority in mathe-

matics and astronomy. He was also instructed to clear up the mystery pertaining to the geography of the Pacific Ocean, especially in the south, by proceeding in that direction as far as latitude 40°. If he found no land he was to sail westward until he reached New Zealand, which was to be thoroughly explored and reported upon.

It was in the carrying out of these instructions, therefore, that on October 7th, 1769, he sighted land in the vicinity of Poverty Bay, anchoring therein two days later. Having completed his survey of the North Island and taken possession of it in the name of the King, he sailed southward to Ship Cove, Queen Charlotte Sound, not realising he was in another island. Here necessary repairs were carried out, and he from a nearby hill saw the strait which now bears his name, and realised for the first time that New Zealand consisted of two separate islands. After again taking possession in the name of the King, he sailed down the East Coast, being uncertain whether Banks Peninsula might not be an island. Continuing his voyage he rounded Stewart Island, but failed to discover Foveaux Strait. Standing in again to the southern portion of the West Coast, he observed what he considered to be a large well sheltered natural harbour, but did not attempt to enter owing to the approach of night and bad visibility. This potential anchorage which he named Dusky Bay was

to become, only twenty-three years later, world famous as the centre of the sealing industry. Proceeding north, he in due course reached Queen Charlotte Sound again, prior to which he sailed along the coast of, and commented, as aforesaid, on the "inhospitable shores" of Old Westland.

Chapter III

Cook at Dusky Sound, 1773—First Shipment of Seal Skins, 1793—Sealing in Westland 116 Years Ago—Description of Westland.

Cook

Captain Cook, during his second voyage round the world in the *Resolution*, sailed into Dusky Sound, on March 26th, 1773, and there established health recruiting quarters for his officers and men. The obtaining of fresh meat was his first consideration and as seals were to be seen in great numbers one was immediately killed and consumed. Having established himself Cook next proceeded to make a survey (and a very excellent survey, too) of Dusky. In this connection, Robert McNab, M.A., LL.B., one time Member of the House of Representatives, and Minister of Lands and Agriculture, in "Murihiku," that incomparable contribution to literature pertaining to the southern portion of the South Island of New Zealand, states that the fact that Cook gave to the world information that here was a safe anchorage, where there was first-class timber

for spars, and myriads of seals, put the southern portion of the West Coast of the South Island definitely on the map, so much so, that as early as 1793, the first sealing gang to visit New Zealand landed there, obtaining 4,500 skins which were sent to the China market; this, with the exception of a few spars obtained by casual vessels visiting the North Island, was the first shipment of any kind sent overseas from this Dominion and to the southern portion of the West Coast must go the credit thereof.

From 1803 sealing became very general and as showing the quantities then existent, comments on Australia by Sir Joseph Banks (whose name is perpetuated in Banks Peninsula), dated June 4th, 1806, were as follows: "The island of Van Diemen, the south-west coast of New Holland, and the southern part of New Zealand produce seals of all kinds in quantities at present almost innumerable. Their stations on rocks and in bays have remained unmolested since the creation. The beach is encumbered with their quantities, and those who visit their haunts have less trouble in killing them than the servants of a victualling office who kill hogs in a pen with mallets."

With such a harvest awaiting the taking, many Australian and other overseas vessels made Dusky Sound their headquarters, operations extending in all directions, and to well

within the southern boundary of Westland. As showing this to be so, the Rev. Richard Taylor, in his book, "New Zealand and its Inhabitants," says: "From the evidence of a person who was formerly engaged in sealing at Dusky Bay, as far back as the year 1823, it appears that from 1826 to 1827 there was an almost constant succession of earthquakes, some of which were sufficiently violent to throw men down. At times he and his party, who then resided on a small island, were so alarmed lest it should be submerged that they put out to sea. There, however, they found no safety, but such was the flux and reflux of the ocean, that they were in the greatest danger of being swamped, and were thankful to get on shore again. The sealers were accustomed to visit a small cove called the jail, which was a most suitable place for anchorage, being well sheltered with lofty cliffs on every side, and having deep water in it close to the shore, so that they could step out from the rocks to their boats. It was situated about eighty miles to the north of Dusky Bay. After the earthquakes the locality was completely altered; the sea had so entirely retired from the cove that it was dry land. Beyond Cascade Point the whole coast presented a most shattered appearance, so much so that its former state could scarcely be recognised; large masses of the mountains had fallen, and in many places the trees might be seen under the water."

It is of great importance to note that Cascade Point is 30 miles north of Westland's southern boundary, and that the sealing grounds extended much further in that direction, and in particular that only men who had "worked" that part of the coast for seals and were familiar with it could describe it with such a wealth of detail; and thus is established the outstanding fact that at least 116 years ago Westland contributed its quota of seals to the many gangs engaged in the industry, which, as noted by R. C. Reid in "Rambles on the Golden Coast," was still existent, though in a very small way, in 1836. There are still seals in the rookery below Carmichaels Plateau, South Westland, but ruthless slaughter has almost entirely exterminated them, and thus has been destroyed a natural industry of the greatest value and importance to the Dominion.

The year 1827 is notable for the fact that the French navigator D'Urville sailed along the shores of Westland in the warship *Astrolabe,* logging its prominent physical features. Of Rapahoe (Cobden Hill), Greymouth, commonly known as the Twelve Apostles, because of its twelve small peaks, which are most regular in formation, and run due north and south, he observed:

> The summit remained saw edged, the teeth of the saw leaning quite uniformly towards the north in a most remarkable way.

Apart from this and the activities of the sealing gangs who found it increasingly hard to obtain skins in payable quantities, and the inter-tribal petty wars of the Maoris, nothing further of importance occurred in Westland's history for almost twenty years, when in 1846 there came the pioneer explorers, and although the early constitutional history of the Dominion does not come within the ramifications of this work, it is essential here to briefly show how the Province under discussion came into being and became known as Westland, and further, to describe it as it was in the beginning.

In this respect it is necessary first to observe that almost immediately after Cook returned to England on the completion of his first voyage round the world, there was published in London, on August 29th, 1771, a pamphlet by Alexander Dalrymple, entitled "Scheme of a Voyage to convey the Conveniences of Life, Domestic Animals, Corn, Iron, etc., to New Zeland [sic], with Dr. Benjamin Franklin's Sentiments on the Subject." The idea Dalrymple had in mind was to civilize the Maoris by furnishing them with useful commodities, taking in exchange whatever goods the natives could supply by way of trade. Dalrymple being unsuccessful in raising money to carry out his plan, the matter dropped, but he was the first to suggest the idea of opening up commerce with New Zealand, thus paving the way for its colonization.

The first attempt at colonization was made in 1825 by a company formed in London, and called the New Zealand Company. An expedition was sent out under Captain Herd, who acquired tracts of land at Hokianga, at Manakau, and on the borders of the Thames. This Company was prevented by adverse circumstances from forming a settlement. In the same year two other persons, namely, Baron Charles de Thierry and Mr. William Stewart, were trying to form colonization companies in London. The former chose for his sphere the North Island and the latter Stewart Island, but neither scheme was successful.

In consequence of frequent visits of whaling vessels to the Bay of Islands a settlement grew up at Kororareka—now called Russell—and in 1833 James Busby was appointed British Resident there.

Seven years later, in 1840, Captain William Hobson, R.N., reached the Bay of Islands and issued a proclamation extending the British Colony of New South Wales to include any parts of New Zealand the sovereignty of which he might acquire from the Maoris. Hobson formally read his commissions at Kororareka on January 30th, 1840, and on February 6th of the same year the Treaty of Waitangi was signed whereby all rights and powers of sovereignty were ceded to Queen Victoria, all territorial rights being secured to the Maoris. On May 21st, 1840, Hobson proclaimed

British sovereignty, in the case of the North Island by virtue of the Treaty of Waitangi, and in the case of the South Island and Stewart Island by right of discovery. On the treaty being signed in the South Island a formal proclamation of British sovereignty of that Island in accordance with the consent of the Maoris was made at Cloudy Bay on June 17th, 1840, by Major Bunbury. New Zealand remained a dependency of New South Wales until May 3rd, 1841, when it was created a separate Colony by Royal Charter, dated November 16th, 1840.

The necessary legislation having at length been enacted, on September 23rd, 1847, a charter was signed dividing the Colony into two Provinces—New Ulster and New Munster. This was proclaimed in New Zealand on March 10th, 1848. Portion of this Charter, however, was suspended for five years and before it came into operation a new Constitution was obtained. Under this the Provinces of New Ulster and New Munster were abolished, and the Colony was divided into six Provinces, Auckland, New Plymouth (later altered to Taranaki), Wellington, Nelson, Canterbury and Otago. Each Province was to be presided over by an elective superintendent, and have an elective Provincial Council empowered to legislate except on certain specified subjects.

The Provincial Governments, which were afterwards increased to nine by the formation

of Hawke's Bay, Marlborough and Southland, later reduced to eight by the merging of Southland with Otago, and again increased to nine by the formation of Westland (which was originally part of the Province of Canterbury), remained as integral parts of the Constitution of the Colony until November 1st, 1876, when they were abolished by an Act of the General Assembly, and re-created as provincial districts. It is worthy of note that the originator of the name Westland was John Rochfort, a pioneer explorer, who had applied the name of Westmoreland to the country lying west of the Southern Alps. It is interesting here also to mention that among the instructions given to Captain Hobson on his appointment as the first Governor of New Zealand was one that the Colony was to be divided into "Counties, hundreds, and parishes." Very little was done towards giving effect to these instructions, and the first administrative County was Westland, separated from the Canterbury Province in 1867, and granted a system of local government in the following year. Known as West Canterbury, prior to attaining the dignity of being made a separate Province, Westland is bounded on the north by the Province of Nelson, on the south by the Province of Otago, on the east by the mighty Southern Alps, and on the west by the tempestuous Tasman Sea. It has an area of about 4,500 square miles, the greater part

of which is high mountainous country, and bush clad to the snow line. In consequence of this the rainfall is profuse, heavy at times, but by no means continuous, periods of fine calm weather with bright sunshine being frequently experienced. As a result, the forest, while dense, is luxuriant to a degree, and, as a matter of fact, is sub-tropical in many places. Sir Arthur Dudley Dobson, an authority already quoted, paints, in "Reminiscences," a virile pen picture of the Province as it was in the beginning; he says: "Westland from the Grey River southwards presented, in 1863, a very different aspect from what it does at the present time. The whole of the country up to the snow line and down to the water's edge was covered with thick forest. Every flood brought down to the sea great quantities of timber, which were thrown up on the beaches, and excepting where the Coast was rock bound the timber piled up in such vast masses that it was quite a climb to get over it into the bush beyond. In many places it was from ten to fifteen feet in height, and from two to three chains in width. At a distance from a river this belt would get smaller, but it was always there. Where the ground was low immediately beyond high water mark, thick scrub grew, with small patches of grass here and there. The scrub on all the low ground was almost impenetrable, small trees up to three and four inches in diameter growing thickly together,

tied up with a mass of supple-jack and lawyer vines. I never attempted to penetrate the scrub without a good sharp billhook. The early diggers at Hokitika told a tale of how, when camped on the beach, a man shot a pigeon on a tree while standing at his tent door; he pushed into the scrub to get it, but found it as thick as a hedge, so he went on his hands and knees crawling under the masses of vines. It took him until dinner-time to reach the tree on which he had shot the bird, and it took him until dark to get back to the tent with the pigeon, the distance being about sixty feet. I can quite believe this to be true, for many years afterwards I set out a line of railway from Westport to the Ngakawau River through this kind of scrub and in many cases it had to be cut on the top as well as on both sides. In fact it was like making a tunnel through the vegetation. Before the diggers came water fowl were very plentiful, and a canoe paddled quietly up stream could go by without causing much disturbance. It was charming to see the teal perched on half submerged logs, and the grey and paradise ducks paddling about among the smaller fowl."

Despite the fact that game was thus found in abundance on the roaring rivers of Westland they were its greatest menace. The dangers of fearful alpine passes and trackless forests were bad enough, and many, many gallant men there laid down their lives,

unhonoured and unsung. But the rivers, as will be shown, claimed many victims, so many that drowning became known as the "national death." Well and truly did Con O'Regan describe the dangers and the dauntless men who pioneered Old Westland as:

". . . . Scorners of despair and fear,
Who roughed it by wild forest, craggy fell,
And through swirl of roaring rivers for many and many a year,
Daily faced the face of Death, and stood it well."

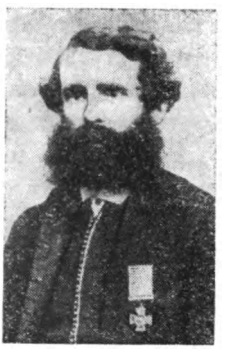
The Maoris unlike the early pioneers seldom attempted to ford a river alone, hence they suffered far less severely. They always travelled in parties, their method being to get a strong light pole long enough for all to get a good hold of, the heaviest and strongest men taking the upstream end, with more heavy men on the other extremity, the women and children being in between. They then all entered the water together, keeping end on to the current, and all heaving upstream, to keep the leader, who broke the force of the water, on his feet; in this manner very rapid rivers could be crossed in comparative safety.

Westland, too, was utterly devoid of natural harbours of any sort, there being a tremendous difference between it and the East Coast of the South Island. The latter, washed as it is by the

expansive Pacific Ocean, has many good harbours and safe beaches, while the former, facing the narrow Tasman Sea, is storm lashed, huge breakers rolling home with irresistible force, making its bar-bound harbours extremely dangerous — and beach travelling at times impossible. As aptly illustrating this great difference the Maoris in their expressive way describe the Pacific Ocean as Tai-Tamahine, the Sea of the Girls, and the Tasman Sea as Tai-Tamatane, the Man Like Ocean. Yet there later came to this wild uncharted shore, hundreds of vessels of every size, sort and description, carrying thousands upon thousands of gold-crazed men, who were prepared to lose their all in attempting to reach the new El Dorado and the gold they knew was there. In this way many vessels and many valuable lives were lost. And still they came in their thousands, and attempted to work those perilous bar harbours, even though broken and battered ships strewed the shore, starkly proclaiming that they who would wrest wealth from Westland must be prepared to face danger and death.

Chapter IV

The Pioneer Explorers, 1846–48 — Thomas Brunner, F.R.G.S. — Charles Heaphy, V.C. — Sir William Fox — Brunner Traverses the Buller and part of Westland's Coastline.



Charles Heaphy

The settlement of Nelson was founded early in 1842, and some four years later Messrs. Thomas Brunner and Charles Heaphy, who were connected with the New Zealand Land Company, set out to explore the country we now know as Westland, with a view "to report on its resources and potentialities as a field for further settlement." They left Nelson on March 17th, 1846, with the Arahura River, in the heart of the greenstone country, as their objective. They were accompanied on this important expedition by a Maori named Ekehu who had previously visited the locality, and had been engaged as guide.

They proceeded by way of the coastal route, and when they reached West Wanganui, to the

south of Cape Farewell, the Maori Chief Niho attempted to stop them from proceeding further unless they paid him for the privilege of so doing. Having no money whatsoever they resorted to strategy, and enticed him to cross the harbour in a canoe, where they left him alone on the beach lamenting, and continued on their way.

When they reached Cape Foulwind, just south of the Buller River, they examined the hull of a vessel of about four hundred tons, and learned from the Maoris living nearby, that many bales of wool had come ashore from this ill-fated ship, and that the crew who had landed safely had been captured and eaten. Subsequent enquiries proved this early wreck to be that of the *Rifleman*—a wool ship which had left Hobart, Tasmania, in 1825, and had not been heard of again.

At length, sixty-five days after leaving Nelson, they reached the Mawhera River (Bright Running Water), to which Brunner gave the name of Grey in honour of Sir George Grey, at that time Governor of the infant colony. During this journey they suffered many privations, being forced to subsist for the most part on the natural production of the land. Apart from the problems of obtaining adequate food supplies, the explorers had other great difficulties to contend with, for in those days, as has already been shown, the

whole countryside from the snowline almost to the sea was covered with heavy forest, and Maori tracks were few and far between.

Brunner and Heaphy, who were the first known white men to set foot within the Mawhera Pa (an isolated Maori settlement situated near the site of the town of Greymouth), were hospitably received by the natives, and after resting, proceeded south to the Taramakau River.

[Authorities differ with regard to the spelling of the word Taramakau. In *The Times* Atlas the name of this river is spelt Teremakau. Mr. Justice Chapman spelt it Taramakau. S. P. Smith, "History and Traditions of the Taranaki Coast," p. 166, says: "Teremakau, not Taramakau." Elsdon Best, "Pounamu or Greenstone," Dominion Museum Bulletin, 4, pp. 156-196, says: "Taramakau, not Teremakau, as usually spelt." Westland authorities, too, consider there are no "e's" in Taramakau, an old-time draughtsman once remarking to the writer, that if there was any doubt about the spelling of the word, it was much stronger looking, and more in keeping with the characteristics of the river in question when spelt in the manner adopted throughout this work.]

Here dwelt the native greenstone-workers, skilled in the manufacture of those wonderful weapons and ornaments peculiar to the Maori race, and so laboriously fashioned from the

boulders of pounamu found in the adjacent streams. From Taramakau, the party pushed on to the Arahura, but upon arrival discovered that all the inhabitants of the pa had gone inland on a bird-snaring expedition.

There was therefore no alternative but to return to the Taramakau, and so back to Mawhera. The following day found the explorers and their native companion at the last-named pa, and here they rested until June 8th, when preparations were made for the long and arduous return journey to Nelson.

Emaciated by hunger, and almost prostrated by the privations and hardships they had undergone, the little party eventually reached West Wanganui, where they picked up stores which had been sent overland. After a stay here they returned to Nelson, arriving home on August 18th, 1846, after an absence of nearly six months.

In their report on the possibilities of the Coast, the explorers stated "that it was unfavourable for settlement, and that for the most part its rivers were unfit for vessels to enter."

Thus Old Westland for the second time received a bad report. Cook stated it was "an inhospitable shore—unworthy of observation" and Brunner and Heaphy condemned it as aforesaid. Yet beneath the surface of this wild land of forest and flood, lay that which was to

"turn a howling wilderness into a busy haunt of men"—for there, gold—gold beyond the dreams of avarice, awaited the taking.

Prior to undertaking the expedition just described, Brunner and Heaphy, accompanied by William Fox (afterwards Sir William, Premier of New Zealand, but at that time Agent for the New Zealand Land Company at Nelson), set out to "ascertain the nature and extent of the tract of country lying on the banks of the river flowing from Lakes Roto-iti and Rotoroa to the West Coast, and to learn whether a practicable route existed across that part of the Island." After reaching the head waters of the river in question, which we now know as the Buller, the party obtained much useful data at great personal risk. On one occasion Sir William Fox, when crossing the river, almost lost his life, being washed off his feet. He was burdened with a very heavy swag and reached the shore with the greatest difficulty. The party, after suffering many hardships, were forced to return to Nelson.

On December 3rd, 1846, Brunner again started on his travels, unaccompanied this time by any European, but with a party of four Maoris, two men named Ekehu and Epiki, and their wives. His object was to explore the Buller River to the sea from where he had turned back with Messrs. Heaphy and Fox the previous February, and to seek an opening to

the eastwards from the lake country or from the West Coast. It was evident that their journey would necessarily be a protracted one, though it was not expected that it would occupy eighty weeks; and the slight preparation made for the undertaking is not the least remarkable feature of this expedition when it is considered that there was no chance of obtaining fresh supplies, and that the greater part of the country to be traversed was wholly uninhabited.

The total outfit of food and clothing for the whole party of five persons cost only £33 9s. 4d., a small sum considering the magnitude of the undertaking. Of course the journey had to be made on foot, and every member of the party was his (or her) own beast of burden. The actual provisions taken were, 10 lbs. of flour, a few biscuits, and a small quantity of tea, sugar, salt and pepper. The bulk of the load consisted of clothing, two guns and ammunition.

From the explorer's diary, which was published in 1848, the following story of this outstanding accomplishment in the history of exploration in New Zealand, has been culled: The journey was commenced in easy stages and a man employed to assist in conveying the goods as far as Stratford's sheep station in the Motueka Valley, which was reached on December 8th. This was at that time the most

remote spot at which any European resided, and Brunner remained there until the 11th to obtain the services of a mule to pack the food and equipment as far as Lake Roto-iti, which was duly reached on the 13th. Here leave was taken of Fraser, the shepherd who accompanied them to that point, and of all civilised life. The route was now the same as that taken by Messrs. Fox, Heaphy and Brunner in the early part of the year and Lake Rotoroa was reached on the 18th. Here the party suffered very severely from dysentery for some days and remained in the neighbourhood until the 30th, preparing fern root which would be their principal item of food for some time. The day following they set out for the Matukituki, and New Year's Day, 1847, saw them battling onward. Despite incessant rain and great privations, they reached the foot of that valley on January 16th. At this point the Buller, having received the waters of both Lakes Roto-iti and Rotoroa, and also several tributary streams, becomes a deep and rapid river.

It was here that Mr. Fox had been swept away the preceding year in attempting to ford it, and Brunner and his party found the greatest difficulty in crossing also. Bad weather now set in and it rained continuously, with the result that all their food was spoiled. They were compelled to retrace their steps to the

Matukituki, to prepare fresh fern root, for such was the character of the black birch country through which they were passing that it provided not the slightest sustenance. They again reached their former shelter on February 3rd, and collected and prepared fern root until the 18th, when they once more proceeded on their way.

Mr. Brunner states that at this stage his load consisted of a gun, 7 lbs. of shot, 8 lbs. of tobacco, two tomahawks, 2 pairs of boots, five shirts, four pairs of trousers, a rug, a blanket, and at least 30 lbs. of fern root. With such heavy swags it was impossible to make rapid headway through a thick bush interspersed with lawyer vines, and two miles a day was considered good going. On March 1st the last handful of flour was used to thicken soup. On the day following one of the Maori women fell ill and this greatly retarded the progress of the party. To make matters worse, Brunner himself suffered the most excruciating pain for some time, as did also one of the Maoris. These seizures were attributed to the fern root diet upon which they were now forced to live. These delays so affected their progress that their provisions were now almost exhausted and they were reduced to one meal of fern root each twenty-four hours.

In the black birch country through which they struggled no food of any kind could be

obtained save an occasional eel caught in the river. At length, on April 6th, after enduring great hardships, the travellers reached better and less broken country, where they obtained an abundant supply of native birds. They were now able to enjoy the luxury of two meals each day. Their way now lay through a valley of rich wooded land, and on the 10th they reached the mouth of a good-sized river flowing down a large valley which opened to the southward.

By the 20th the termination of the valley was reached and the party again entered a mountain gorge. From this time until they reached the coast on June 4th their sufferings were intense. The country through which they were passing was the worst of its kind, and the scarcity of food was so great that Brunner was compelled to shoot and eat his favourite dog, being afterwards known to the Maoris as Kai Kuri (dog eater). . . . In an entry a few days later Brunner tells us that on one occasion he was without food for almost three days. The incessant rain experienced at this juncture added greatly to their misery, scarcely a day passing without a terrific downpour taking place; and it is on record that it rained solidly for several days in succession.

The trials and tribulations of the travellers did not end here, however, for the natives whom they expected to find at a pa on the

coast were away and had left no food behind them. Instead of enjoying the good meal of potatoes they had looked forward to they were compelled to eat seaweed which did not agree with them. Two days later the natives returned with fresh supplies of food and all was well. Brunner rested here until June 15th, and then set out for the Arahura Pa, which was about one hundred miles further south. This pa was reached without any great difficulty, and after resting here for some time, they returned to the Taramakau, where they remained until the following spring.

It was not until October 12th that Brunner, rested and refreshed, resumed his journey. Writing on that date he states: "With a right good will I mounted my load on my back and after many shakes of the hand, and much rubbing noses, I left the Taramakau natives, and once more felt myself moving with my inclinations. I had the company of three chiefs here, Te-kau-hauke, Tipiha and Paeture and his daughter, just in my opinion a nice little party. We soon reached the Arahura and put up for the night which proved to be a rainy one."

On the 15th they set out for Okitika (Hokitika), a river of considerable size, at the mouth of which there was formerly a large pa. Here they remained for some days, and then again proceeded south.

The following significant entry appears on the 21st of the same month. "I believe that I may now assert that I have overcome the two greatest difficulties to be met with by bushmen in New Zealand, viz., the capability of walking barefoot, and subsisting on fern root. The first, the want of shoes had been a dread to me for some time, often fearing I should be left a barefooted cripple in some desolate black birch forest on this deserted coast, but now I can trudge along barefoot, or with a pair of native sandals, called by the Maoris parairai, which are made of leaves of the ti, or flax tree. I can make a sure footing in crossing rivers, ascending or descending precipices, in fact I feel I am just commencing to make exploring easy work. A good pair of sandals will last about two days' hard work, and take about twenty minutes to make."

Just prior to reaching the Okarito Pa they passed the wreck of a large sealing boat, which was a quarter mile inshore from high water mark. Brunner noted that "the growth of the bushes and the appearance of the wreck show that the sea is fast receding from this coast." Okarito was originally a very large pa principally used as a base for bird snaring and fishing, and was regarded as of great importance as a food producing centre. "That it abounds in eels," says Brunner, "I had full proof of, during my visit here, our diet being

nothing else, and was served out in liberal quantities, to dogs as well as Christians, three times a day. There are six natives living here," he continues, "two men and four women. They are of the Wesleyan Church, and apparently very punctual and zealous in their worship."

After a sojourn of six days they constructed a raft of the blossom sticks of flax and so crossed the lagoon, walking on a further four miles to another stream. There they were obliged to erect a shelter, very bad weather setting in.

On the last day of October they were still sheltering and the natives proposed returning to Okarito for divine service on the Sunday. To this Brunner agreed, knowing, he states, "that we should get a good dinner and more comfortable lodging there." The explorer here comments most interestingly on the religious fervency of the Maoris: "I am much astonished," he mentions, "to find that even in these distant parts so much should be said by the natives belonging to the Church of England, and the Wesleyans, relative to their form of religion. Although in some places there are only six or eight natives, yet they have two places of worship and two schools; and are always quarrelling about religion, each party asserting its way to be the proper service to God. There are some few who have been christened by the Revd. C. L. Reay and a few

by Mr. Aldred, the Ministers of the two Churches in Nelson."

On November 9th Brunner was "again southing," passing through country which he described as worthless. On the 14th they reached a small Maori settlement called Porangirangi, where there was a potato garden, and the travellers, "assured of a good meal, stopped for the night and the Sabbath." On the 16th the night was spent in another native settlement, Parika, where, states Brunner, "we received the welcome of strangers, in a bountiful supply of fern root, preserved wekas and fish."

The hospitality of the natives at Parika was enjoyed for the next two days, during which sufficient eels were caught and dried to provide food for one week as the country ahead was said to be devoid of sustenance of any sort. On the 19th, when approaching the Waiho, Brunner met with a most unfortunate accident. Rounding a small headland he was washed from a rock by a heavy sea, both his feet being badly crushed and his right ankle severely sprained. Finding it impossible to proceed he attempted to return to Parika, but was prevented from so doing that day by his lameness and the incoming tide making beach travelling impossible. On the following day, however, they were successful and Brunner dressed his broken feet with weka oil and bandaged and

bathed his ankle, which was now very badly swollen. Here, suffering intensely, he was compelled to remain until December 10th. During this time the weather was very bad, continuous rain being experienced. As a result of this the rivers became flooded, natives reporting the Waiho as unfordable.

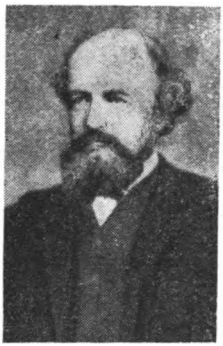
Brunner, who at this time was seriously ill, made the following entry on December 11th: "Yesterday I resolved to return to Mawhera, and rejoin my own Maoris, and endeavour once more to see a white face and hear my native tongue, so I retraced my steps to Porangirangi. I was induced to make Parika (Paringa, as we know it) the terminus of my southing for several reasons: my lameness had made me anxious to return to Nelson, the summer season was fast approaching to a close and I dreaded the idea of another long winter. The country I was passing through was quite worthless, and certainly so in respect to Nelson, and I had a wish of returning by a fresh route and of seeing more of the country. I also resolved to try getting back by the Mawhera if I should abandon the idea of crossing the island from the Taramakau to Port Levy. Had I urged the natives to proceed further south with me, I could not get their services to assist me with a canoe up the Mawhera, so that being here without resources I was very much at the mercy of the natives. When I told Te Raipo of

my resolution of returning he was very glad and said that having only one white man was too big a responsibility on his hands; if there were two he would not care, as, if any accident occurred, one might live to tell the fate of the other. 'But,' he said, 'if you died it would be said that I had killed you for the sake of eating or plunder.' . . ."

Travelling back in fine weather and by easy stages, Brunner reached the Arahura on December 22nd where he notes he "feasted on new potatoes, a treat—having lived lately on fish." The day following he walked to the Taramakau, and on Christmas Eve reached the Mawhera Pa, where many natives had gathered to celebrate fittingly the religious services pertaining to this great occasion.

Chapter V

Brunner at Mawhera Pa—Discovery of Brunner Coal Seam — Lake Brunner — Traverse of Inangahua — Brunner Seriously Ill — Heroic Struggle to Nelson.



Thomas Brunner

The year 1848 did not open auspiciously for Brunner, who was still resting at the Mawhera Pa. He was thoroughly run down and his teeth at this time became a source of great trouble to him, his face becoming so badly swollen that he could not eat for some days. Recovering somewhat, he walked twenty miles south to Okitika for a kit of dried fish a Maori had given him. This was a very welcome addition to the scanty store of food he had managed to get together to be used on the return to Nelson, via the Mawhera (Grey) River.

The weather being favourable, Brunner on January 25th set out on this historic journey, a journey which was to prove momentous in the history of Westland, as it was marked by his discovery of the famous coal seam near the site of the town which to-day bears his name.

The discovery is thus graphically described by the traveller in his journal:—

"This morning we freighted our canoes with provisions, clothes, and fishing apparatus. I considered myself on board the admiral's canoe, which was the largest and first to start, having in company three others. The names of the canoes that ascended the river with me were Te Wairakou, with myself and nine natives; Te Maikai, with my four natives and Aperahama; Te Paiekau, with two natives carrying nets, etc., for fishing; and Te Matamata, with four natives; so I think I am well equipped, considering I had nothing to give the natives for all their trouble, except good wishes.

"There was much crying when I left, and apparently some good feeling towards me. They told me to return amongst them and share what they had, and, although tobacco is very much valued among them, they offered me two sticks, the half of all their stock.

"It is really an exciting scene to see four canoes poling and paddling up a fine stream on a clear day. We came up about five miles of the river, and camped at an old fishing station, prettily placed on an island called 'Moutapu,' which rises about 100 feet above the level of the river. At this point the river is confined between two low black birch hills, part of the coast range.

"The level land of the coast reaches to this point—all timbered, chiefly with rata, on either side of the river.

"About a mile above Moutapu is a seam of coal, apparently of very fine quality, which presents itself under a stratum of mica slate. The coal is very hard and brittle, very bright and sparkling, burns freely, and is free from smell. The seam is some feet deep and level with the river's edge, but at least 100 feet below the surface of the earth."

On the 27th the party proceeded up the Mawhera to the point where it joins with the river now known as the Arnold, and here they remained for two days, this being a particularly good fishing ground. On the 29th they ascended the Arnold, reaching the lake which now bears Brunner's name, in the evening. This lake the explorer describes as "a fine sheet of water, about six or seven miles square, near the middle of which is an island where we camped."

This island is where the Maoris kept their prisoners and was the scene of the last cannibalistic feast on the West Coast. From time to time, in later years, many greenstone ornaments and weapons have been found here, and old-time Coast natives asserted that much fighting had taken place in the vicinity.

On January 30th, Brunner made the following entry in his diary: "This is the lake

frequented by the natives on their way to the East Coast. This is a memorable day for me, having just put my last bit of tobacco in my pipe. I am afraid time, or rather wet weather, will seem long as I now have no amusement left. . . . There is a fresh water mussel, called Kaichau, abounding in this lake which we also found in Rotoroa, which, when boiled with the roots of the raupo, or bullrush, makes a palatable dish, and is the favourite meal of the celebrated savage Rauparaha."

On the following day the return journey to the Mawhera River was made, and on February 1st Brunner said good-bye to the Coast natives and with his original party set out for Nelson. He travelled up the Mawhera-iti, or Little Grey, and, crossing the Waimunga Saddle, dropped down into the valley of the Inangahua, following this river down to its confluence with the Buller, which was reached just four weeks later.

April was ushered in by very bad weather and the river they were traversing soon became very high. On the 3rd the rain continued to pour down, and at midday a stream came rolling down the cliffs at the foot of which the travellers were camped, totally destroying the shelter they had erected. So rapid was the rise of the river that they were compelled to build a ladder and so reach a ledge some twenty feet higher up the cliff.

Here they found shelter from the wind but none from the rain, and it was with the greatest difficulty that they managed to keep their food from being spoiled.

They were compelled to remain in this uncomfortable position until the 10th, by which time their supplies were consumed and they were forced to proceed in the hope of procuring sustenance of some kind. Later in the afternoon they managed to obtain a small supply of fern root, but on the day following they had no food whatever. On the 12th and 13th they managed to net a quantity of grayling, and, the weather clearing, good progress was made on the 14th.

On the 15th Brunner became seriously ill, his entry for that day being as follows: "This morning I could not stir, having lost the use of my side, and although I had never before been a hindrance to the natives, always carrying my full share of the loads and helping to get firewood, etc., yet I had the mortification of hearing Epiki propose to Ekehu that they should proceed and leave me, saying that I appeared too ill to recover soon, if ever, and that the place where they were was devoid of food, but Ekehu refused to leave me; Epiki and his wife then moving onwards. I received great kindness from Ekehu and his wife for the week I was compelled to remain here, the woman attending me kindly and Ekehu

working hard to obtain food for us, always pressing on me the best. He frequently told me he would never return to Nelson without me."

The next three days were fine, but food was desperately scarce. Ekehu, it is recorded, was able to snare three thrushes and find a small quantity of fern root only. On the 20th Brunner was able to drag himself about, but was still without the use of his side. Two days later he states: "Although I could only stand on one leg, yet I resolved to try and proceed. Ekehu had scoured the country but could find nothing eatable within reach, and he would not leave me for a night, so he carried my bed clothes forward for some distance and partly by carrying and partly by leading assisted me along."

For the next three days this dauntless man, more dead than alive, battled on without food; then Ekehu found two fern trees, the roots of which they cooked in a Maori oven and ate. Shortly after this they came across Epiki and his wife, who were also starving and scouring the country for food.

At this stage Brunner was very far through, will power alone driving him on, for he could not now travel without assistance and to add to his misery heavy rain fell almost continuously and he was wet through all the time. Yet still he battled on. At length they reached

a stream called by the natives Muri-ira, which they attempted to ford but it was too deep and rapid for them in their weakened state. No material with which to construct a raft being available, they were obliged to ascend the river four miles before they could cross. On reaching the other side they found firewood to be plentiful and building a huge fire they sat round it in the rain. No shelter of any sort was nearby, nor had they any food.

On Sunday, the 28th, they reached the banks of the Buller once more and here they again put in the night without food or shelter. On the last day of April they arrived at their old camp at the Matukituki which was still standing, and, collecting a great supply of fern root, they made, with the utmost dispatch, a meal of it. Here they remained for three weeks, Brunner being desperately ill again, and as he says, "unable to proceed through inability." So bad was he that his left eye and hand as well as his side were affected. To add to his trials he "was seized with a violent vomiting," which he attributed to the badness of the living and continued exposure to the cold weather. On May 20th he resumed his struggle onward, covering a little ground and coming up with Epiki and his wife, who meantime had caught some wekas which provided at long last a good supper. Two days later there was a fall of snow and they were forced to take shelter.

On the 24th they reached a camp they had occupied the year before and here a very serious misfortune overtook Brunner. Being wet through they had hung their clothes, etc., up to dry and during the night a kit belonging to the explorer fell into the fire and was burnt. This contained all his sketches, several skins of birds, some curiosities, and two letters which he carried for the Messrs. Deans (the original settlers on the Canterbury Plains) in case he should cross over to the East Coast. During the early part of June it snowed every day, the weather generally being very bad and progress slow. It was also very cold and this seriously affected Epiki and his wife who suffered from cramp and were forced to rest at intervals. Proceeding slowly on they reached Lake Rotoroa on the evening of the 5th and found the canoe they had left there the year previously in excellent condition. The night was spent in their old camp, and the following day they crossed the lake without any difficulty. On the evening of the 7th they erected two shelters. These were made of black birch, "one of which," states Brunner, "fell down and struck my lame side while I was sleeping by the fire and hurt me very much." For the next three days there was continuous snow and rain, and they had no food at all. On the 12th they struggled on to their old quarters at Lake Roto-iti, where they saw six sheep and the

tracks of a large flock which very much astonished them. It was still snowing heavily. On the following day they with great difficulty crossed the Roto-iti River which was in heavy flood. On the 14th they managed to catch fourteen woodhens and all were able to enjoy a good meal again.

An old survey camp which had fallen was reached on the 15th. "Ekehu and his wife much wished to stop here," writes Brunner, "as Epiki and his wife were behind. I said that I should push on and endeavour to spend the night at Fraser's, at all events on the side of the Motueka, and when I mentioned tea and bread the woman agreed to follow me. I pushed on to prevent hearing the grumbling of Ekehu about sore feet, for after dark we were sorely pricked by the ground thorn, and reached Fraser's at ten o'clock at night. He rose and gave me a real hearty welcome, and a smoke of good tobacco. So I thanked God that I had once more reached the abode of civilised man, of which I had many fears during my illness, the thought of which preyed on my mind. It is a period of nearly five hundred and sixty days since I wished Fraser good-bye on the banks of the Roto-iti River and my seeing him at his house this evening. I have never during this time heard a word of English save the broken gibberish of Ekehu and the echo of my own voice, and I

rather feel astonished to find I could both understand and speak English as well as ever, for during many wet days, I had never spoken a word of my own language, nor conversed even in Maori, of which I was well tired." From Fraser's it was a comparatively simple matter for the little expedition to reach the rising settlement of Nelson from which they had been absent for over eighteen months.

Brunner in his report to the New Zealand Government made a strong appeal for the natives scattered along the West Coast, who were isolated and cut off by natural barriers from the rest of their countrymen. They had received no assistance from the Government or the two missionary bodies who were doing their best for the native race in other parts of the colony. He further suggested the introduction of goats which he considered would do well, and greatly assist in solving the food problem, none knowing better than he the difficulty of subsisting on the meagre natural production of the wild and broken country that he had been the first to explore.

To-day, thousands of tourists, passing through the City of Nelson en route to Westland's Scenic Wonderland, speed along well-constructed highways, traversing some of the most magnificent seascape, forest and mountain scenery in the world, and reach in a few hours the Waiho, where is situated the

famous Franz Josef Glacier and near the termination point of Brunner's "southing." Because of the luxurious comfort enjoyed during this never-to-be-forgotten motor drive, some may be prone to disparage the explorer's achievement of nearly a century ago. But it should ever be remembered that the forest through which he walked (or crawled when the undergrowth became too thick) was then in its primeval condition, with innumerable spurs and gullies to be reconnoitred, with flooded rivers (which held him up for weeks on end) to be crossed, and miles of howling black birch country, utterly devoid of natural food of any sort, to be traversed. Remember, too, that at times he was starving, and so weakened by constant exposure to the weather, that he fell ill, and had it not been for the devotion of the Maori Ekehu and his wife, would have died. Yet even when all these things are taken into consideration, the actual extent of the privations suffered by Thomas Brunner could only have been known in reality to the adventurous explorers who followed, and to the fearless gold miners, who travelled, years later, over much of the same ground in their frenzied search for the metal royal.

Brunner's services were recognized in the colony and in London, the Royal Geographical Society's medal being awarded to him; and who was more entitled to receive

this distinction than he who proudly stated in his diary that he believed he had overcome the two greatest difficulties to be met with by bushmen in New Zealand, "the capability of walking barefoot and of subsisting on fern root"?

The intrepid Brunner blazed the trail and in so doing gave to the world the first authentic information pertaining to Old Westland, incidentally adding his name to the scroll of fame as a great explorer.

Brunner was subsequently appointed Chief Surveyor for the Province of Nelson. He died in 1874, aged 50 years, his early death being the direct result of the hardships and privations endured while exploring the Coast.

Charles Heaphy, Brunner's companion during the expedition of 1846, removed to Auckland after his return to Nelson, and served with distinction in the Maori Wars, during which campaign he rose to the rank of major, and was decorated for conspicuous gallantry, being awarded the V.C. Upon the cessation of hostilities he received the appointment of Chief Surveyor for the Auckland Province, and for several years represented Parnell in the House of Representatives, besides being the holder of various public offices. Broken in health he ultimately retired from public life and settled in Brisbane, where he died in 1881.

Chapter VI

Subsequent Explorers — The Oakes Expedition, 1857 — James Mackay Explores Grey Valley —Harper and Locke Cross Southern Alps, 1857 — James Mackay's Second Visit, 1859 — John Rochfort.

John Rochfort

It was not until nine years after the departure of Brunner that Europeans again visited Westland, and then they came by way of the sea. These adventurous voyagers were the Oakes brothers, Thomas, John, and Joseph, who set out in March, 1857, from Port Cooper (Lyttelton), in the schooner *Emerald Isle,* bound for the West Coast, in quest of gold. They sailed down the East Coast and round the southern end of the South Island, then beating up the West Coast reached Martin's Bay where they landed and spent some days prospecting. Coming further north they put into Jackson's Bay, where they obtained a little gold, afterwards proceeding to the Hokitika River which they entered in good style, theirs being the first known vessel

to do so. Here a few days were spent in prospecting with very encouraging results. Proceeding still further north they arrived off the Grey River, and standing boldly in, successfully crossed the bar and made fast to the trees of the forest. The *Emerald Isle* was thus the first vessel to enter the Grey, though many writers give this honour to the *Gipsy* in 1860, and in the case of Hokitika, to the S.S. *Nelson* in 1864, the Oakes Expedition being entirely overlooked. Safely inside, the brothers proceeded up the Grey River in the ship's boat, and located the coal seam discovered by Brunner, believing they were the first to do so. They carried out prospecting operations in various parts of the district, obtaining some good gold, later returning to Port Cooper where they reported their discovery. In 1895 the leader of the party, Thomas Oakes, petitioned Parliament for some recognition for being the first to discover the metal royal in Westland, but without avail.

The Oakes brothers were a splendid type of adventurous men, who dared and overcame the perils of a wild uncharted coast. They were the first Europeans to report the existence of gold in Westland, for which they received no reward and have long since passed by, like ships in the night, without recognition.

The next to carry on the work of exploration was James Mackay, a Government Land

Wrecks at Hokitika, 1865. Seven ships ashore. Note signal station to seaward of vessel in foreground on right.

Shipping at Hokitika, 1865, 41 vessels in port.

Purchase Officer, who reached the Mawhera Pa in March, 1857. This daring explorer of the West Coast, described to the writer by the late Sir Arthur Dudley Dobson as "the peer of them all," was born in Scotland in 1831, and some fourteen years later landed with his parents at Nelson. In his youth he explored the greater part of the mountainous country in the vicinity of his home—a task which fitted him well for the strenuous years ahead, when he was to lead many expeditions successfully through wild and trackless lands, and to earn for himself, by self sacrifice, determination, and outstanding ability, an honoured place in the annals of New Zealand's pioneer explorers. Mackay's career from the outset was a most remarkable one, he having the distinction of being made a Goldfields Warden in 1858, then being only twenty-seven years of age, this appointment being the first of its kind in the colony.

Mackay's first expedition took place in 1856, when he traversed the whole of the mountainous country lying between the head waters of the Aorere, Heaphy (Wakapoai), Mackay (Karamea), and Anatoki Rivers, and also a portion of the country between the sources of the Takaka and Karamea Rivers; whilst in 1857 he travelled along the sea-coast from West Wanganui to the Grey River. In

his first exploration he was accompanied by John Clarke, of Pakawau, two Massacre (Golden) Bay natives going with him on his second trip.

On this latter occasion soundings were taken when at the Buller which was found to be navigable for coasting vessels of considerable draught. Proceeding south, the little party arrived at the Miko Cliffs (better known afterwards as Jacob's Ladder), near Romney Point. The ladders which were used by the natives to scale the cliffs were found to be decayed and had to be restored. This took some considerable time, and when they had at length ascended and hoisted up their swags and dogs they heard voices exclaiming, "He Kuri Pakeha! He Kuri Pakeha!" (a dog of European breed), they having encountered a party of Maoris bound for the Buller, who immediately took to the bush and there remained for some time, being afraid to approach the exploring party. Gaining confidence somewhat later, the natives seemed very pleased at seeing a European as no white man had been there since Brunner's visit in 1847. At Mackay's request they agreed to cancel their trip to the Buller and to return to Mawhera with him. On arrival there Mackay made known his intention of exploring some open grass land at Ahaura, in the Grey Valley, and he made arrangements with the natives to convey him there in a

canoe by way of the Grey River, agreeing to pay them the sum of £10 for so doing. All went well until they had proceeded a few miles on their journey, when the Westland natives persuaded the Massacre Bay Maoris not to proceed further unless Mackay divided £50 between them. The explorer, who was then a strong athletic young man of about twenty-five years of age, declined to do so, and on being threatened threw one of the Maoris into the river, and knocked another down in the canoe. Tarapuhi, the local chief, then appeared on the scene, acted as peacemaker, and volunteered to go as guide. When the industrial history of Westland comes to be written, this incident should be regarded as the first of the many strikes that have taken place in the province and also noted as being of the shortest duration to date.

Mackay explored the grass and open country at the Ahaura, Totara Flat, and Mawhera-iti (Little Grey), and then returned to the mouth of the Grey River where he took soundings in a canoe, with the result that he found the river navigable for small craft. He afterwards returned to Nelson by the coastal route, carrying with him the first sample of Brunner coal that ever left the district. After his return he was appointed Assistant Under-Secretary for Native Affairs as there were grave disputes between the Maoris and Europeans who were

at that period working the Aorere Goldfields. It is necessary to note here that although Messrs. Brunner and Heaphy had pronounced the rivers of Westland "for the most part unfit for vessels to enter," Mackay by actual soundings proved this to be incorrect, with the result that from this date small ships were always used when food supplies were needed.

The same year is marked by the fact that for the first time white men crossed the Southern Alps from the Canterbury side, and after a terrible journey duly reached their objective, the Mawhera Pa. These men were Messrs. Harper and Locke, who travelled by way of the Hurunui River. This was the pass most generally used by the Maoris, and had been known to them centuries before the coming of the pakeha.

Leonard Harper, the leader of the party, was the son of the first Bishop of Christchurch, and he persuaded Tainui, the Maori Chief, who was on a visit to Kaiapoi, to guide Locke and himself across the Alps. He started from Kaiapoi on October 30th, 1857, and overtook the Maoris who had gone on in advance near the station now known as "Horsley Down." All their equipment and provisions were carried on pack horses and they made excellent progress until they came to the south bank of the Hurunui. There they came across an old canoe and packing all their equipment into it, they towed

it along the bank until they came to Lake Sumner. Here they turned loose their horses owing to the rough nature of the country, and dividing their food, tents, etc., among themselves, proceeded on foot. Bad weather set in when they reached the foot of the saddle, and for two days they were compelled to stay in camp. As soon as the weather cleared they started again and reached the top of the pass without mishap. From here they were able to see about twenty miles down the valley of the Taramakau. For some distance this valley was narrow and very rough, high boulders being strewn in every direction, while the bush was thick and hard to travel in—being almost impenetrable. After they had battled their way about fifteen miles down the Taramakau, they came to the Otira River, where they were compelled to camp for some days owing to the bad weather prevailing. Again resuming their journey, they made rapid progress to Lake Brunner. Here they rested a few days, the Maoris with them advising that the Arnold River was navigable for canoes, and that they could make the Mawhera Settlement easily in one day, but the party decided to proceed by way of the Taramakau. The going from this point became much rougher and it was decided to construct a raft of flax sticks and use this as a means of transport. The raft being completed, they camped for the night on an island

in mid stream. Before morning, rain commenced to fall in torrents and the river rapidly rose and commenced to flood the island. The rain continuing, there was nothing left but to take to the raft. On their embarking, they were at once whirled away by the current, and in dire peril. After travelling down stream for some distance they were able to land on another island and there remained until the flood subsided. From this point they dropped down the river without further adventure until they came to the Maori Pa not far from the mouth. Here they were well received by the natives and rested for some days. The journey to this point had occupied 23 days, much longer than was expected, and in consequence their food supply had run out, and they were compelled to live on what they were able to catch. In this respect the Maoris showed wonderful ingenuity in trapping birds, while eels were also in good supply. From the pa they proceeded north to the Mawhera, accompanied by Chief Tarapuhi. Here Locke broke down, his feet giving out with the rough travelling he had undergone.

Leonard Harper, after resting for some time, decided to proceed south, and he continued down the Coast for over 200 miles. On this trip he saw the great glaciers, the Franz Josef, and the Fox, which he named the Albert and the Victoria respectively, after the Prince Consort

and Queen Victoria. These names were not adopted. Still proceeding south, Harper and Tarapuhi reached Big Bay. Here they stayed some time, then came back to the Taramakau by easy stages, many Maoris accompanying them. At the Taramakau, Locke was met, having recovered completely and at once preparations were made for a return journey across the alps. Tarapuhi was engaged as guide, as two of the natives who had made the trip over decided to remain. On this occasion the party went as far as possible up the river in canoes, and in eight days they had reached the top of the pass and had crossed into Canterbury. Here they met with bad weather and were snowed up for some time. To make matters worse their clothes, which were torn to pieces, gave but little protection against the intense cold. Somehow or other they managed to battle their way on to Lake Sumner, where they sheltered in a shepherd's hut for some time before proceeding to Christchurch. The whole trip occupied over three months and was very strenuous throughout, great hardships being suffered. At the same time much valuable information was obtained, the most notable being the fact that gold was to be found in many places. Some splendid specimens were obtained and brought back to the Provincial Government officials, but they, fearing a wave

of undesirables, did not make public the story of the discovery, and strange to say, it was not until seven years later that the news leaked out, and when it did, thousands of fortune hunters poured over this pass to Westland, the new El Dorado.

By way of an interlude, and in an endeavour to tell this story in its chronological sequence it must be noted that in the year 1858 there came the first persistent whispers that gold was existent on the West Coast. So much was this so that on April 17th of that year the *Nelson Examiner,* then one of the foremost and best informed papers in the colony, announced the discovery of gold at the Buller, in the south-west portion of the Nelson Province, stating that: "A West Coast Chief, Tarapuhi, and his brother, Tainui, returned to Canterbury with G. W. H. Lee, who had taken up the first run on the West Coast, in the Grey district. They brought specimens of small scaly gold with them, stating that it had been brought down in great quantities from a hill called Whakapoi, on the north bank of the Buller River, and that it could be found in abundance." In the latter part of the year 1858 James Mackay and Major John Lockett did a considerable amount of exploration between the head waters of the Takaka, Karamea (Mackay), and Wangaro Rivers, and discovered Mount Lockett, Mount Peel and the Diamond Lakes.

In 1859 James Mackay, accompanied by his cousin, Alexander Mackay (one time Commissioner and Judge of the Native Land Court), again travelled to Westland, their mission being to purchase from the natives all the lands, comprising about seven and a half million acres, between Kahurangi Point and Milford Haven, and extending inland to the watershed of the East and West Coasts. On this occasion Mackay elected to travel by way of the alpine route, and when the party reached Lake Sumner they found John Rochfort, who had entered into a contract to survey the southern boundary of the Province of Nelson, and to traverse the Grey and Buller Rivers, and a portion of the coastline, camped there waiting for the weather to improve before attempting the crossing into Westland. The two parties for mutual protection and assistance joined forces, and towards the end of April tried to cross the saddle dividing the Hurunui and Taramakau Rivers. A very heavy fall of snow, however, made this impossible, and they were forced to go into camp again, where they remained for one week. When the weather cleared Mackay and Rochfort took the lead and good progress was made until they came to a bluff which compelled them to cross the Taramakau. In so doing Rochfort lost his footing on a slippery ledge of rock, and was rapidly carried down the

river, the current tossing him about in all directions, and as he was carrying a very heavy swag he had but little chance of helping himself.

Fortunately Mackay had chosen a place further down the river to make his effort to cross, and seeing the danger that Rochfort was in, he grasped, when in mid-stream, a large rock with one hand and with the other was able to get a firm hold of his companion as he was being carried past. With the utmost difficulty and at great personal risk he managed to hold Rochfort's head above water until the rest of the party came to his assistance.

In official records this incident, like many others of a similar nature, is not commented upon. Such happenings were all in the day's work. Mackay, in a spirit of brotherhood almost beyond human understanding, was as a matter of course prepared to lay down his life for his friend, and he was no exception to the rule. The pioneers of Westland, in common with the pioneers of the whole of the Dominion, put service before personal safety, be the cost of that service what it may . . . . even life itself.

Proceeding, the parties kept together until they reached the Otira Stream, where Rochfort commenced his surveying operations, traversing the Taramakau to the Pakihi Plain, thence to

Lake Brunner and then down the River Arnold to the Mawhera Pa. The Mackays on the other hand followed the Taramakau down to the sea and then proceeded north along the coast to Mawhera, where negotiations were begun for the purchase of lands from the natives, who agreed to take two hundred pounds, but declined to sell the block lying between the Grey and Hokitika Rivers.

The Mackays, thus being unable to come to terms with the Maoris, decided to return to Nelson by way of Maruia Plain and the Upper Buller, but after a desperate struggle, during which they suffered many privations, they were forced to retrace their steps to the Mawhera Pa, later proceeding by the coastal route to the Buller, where they found the cutter *Supply* and embarked for Nelson.

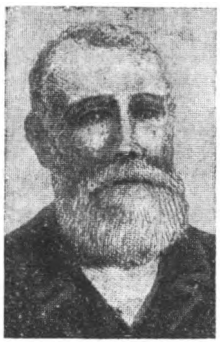
It is necessary to state here that Mackay and Rochfort had chartered this little vessel (John Walker, Master) to bring provisions to the Grey, but owing to bad weather she had been unable to enter there and had landed their supplies at the Buller. With regard to the cutter *Supply,* many writers state she was the first vessel to enter the Buller, but this is not so, the schooner *Three Brothers,* Captain Thoms in command, having done so in January, 1844, some fifteen years previously.

Reverting again to Rochfort, who had meantime proceeded to the Buller, it should

be noted in view of his subsequent activities in Westland, that he had had considerable Australian experience before settling in Nelson, and also that he was a first-class Maori scholar, who trained natives to assist him. Being also without peer as a bushman, he was admirably equipped for the dangerous and strenuous duties pertaining to his profession in a wild and almost unknown land. It has been written of John Rochfort that, "in traversing the mighty Buller River from its source to the sea, he accomplished a feat unparalleled in the history of surveying in this colony, that is, he managed for many months to carry out his work in a dense forest country without stores and provisions, other than the indigenous natural production of the district"; for he had the dire misfortune to lose all his provisions when a canoe was upset at the commencement of the work. He discovered the famous coal seams at Mount Rochfort, near Westport, and found several small pieces of gold at the Old Diggings in November, 1859, and was thus the first to discover the existence of the precious metal in the Buller. Later he carried out a series of surveys in Westland, traversing the coastline in 1864, while the following year when laying out the town of Greymouth he named its principal street Mackay in honour of his friend and fellow explorer.

Chapter VII

James Mackay cuts Track from Roto-iti Plains to Grey River, 1860—Purchase of Native Lands —The Deed of Sale—Rent of Reserves amounts to £424,000.



James Mackay

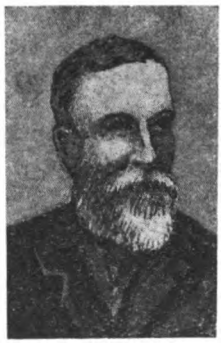
James Mackay, it will be remembered, had embarked at the Buller, on the cutter *Supply* for Nelson, and on his arrival there, he was ordered to proceed to Auckland, for the purpose of interviewing Governor Gore Browne with regard to the purchase of the West Coast from the natives. After receiving Mackay's report, the Governor instructed him to offer the Maoris a sum not exceeding £400, and to do his utmost to close the deal.

So once more in February, 1860, the explorer set out for Westland, with the four hundred sovereigns in his swag. This time he was accompanied by Alexander Mackay, Frank Flowers, and three Maoris from the Massacre Bay District. They travelled to the Roto-iti Plains with the intention of finding a

practicable roadline via the Upper Buller and Maruia to the Grey at the point where Mackay's exploration had terminated the previous year. Sir Julius von Haast, who had been engaged soon after his arrival in New Zealand to report on the geology of the south-western part of the Province of Nelson, accompanied the explorers during a portion of their expedition. He remained in the vicinity of the Tiraumea, awaiting a fresh supply of provisions, whilst the explorers were engaged in cutting a track for his guidance up the Maruia Valley, through the bush and on to the grass plains. At this time the party were almost destitute of provisions, and the supplies of birds and fern root were very scanty—so scanty, indeed, that it was considered wise for Alexander Mackay and Frank Flowers to return to Nelson, leaving James Mackay and the natives to carry on alone.

They made little headway, however, owing to the lack of food and to the fact that the Maoris became disheartened and refused to proceed further. They said, "We are in an unknown country, which is inhabited by wild men and great lizards, which will presently appear . . . . we will return to Nelson, or lie down and quietly die in the camp" . . . . they were indeed starving and exhausted. Mackay's determination, however,

prevailed and somehow or other he kept them going — though at this time his own right knee was so badly swollen, having been poisoned by spear grass, that he had to cut and gash it with a razor and so reduce the swelling that he might proceed.



S. M. Mackley

A little later, when the situation was desperate, Mackay sighted a distant hill which he had ascended when in the upper Grey district, and was therefore able to define his position and assure the natives that they would reach the Mawhera Pa in two days' time. This assumption was correct, and so ended a terrible journey which lasted no less than seven weeks. In this connection be it noted the Nelson Provincial Government voted Mackay a bonus of £150 for "defining the track from the Roto-iti Plains, via Maruia, to the mouth of the Grey River."

On his arrival at the Mawhera Pa on March 2nd, 1860, Mackay found S. M. Mackley, a Nelson settler, and seven Massacre Bay natives there. They had travelled down the coast from Collingwood, Mackley's mission being the location of an area suitable for farming purposes. Fortunately, in his youth,

he had studied for the medical profession, and, having a few simple remedies with him, he treated Mackay's knee with such good effect that that indomitable man was ready for the road again in a few days. Food at this particular time was very scarce, the natives having but little to spare and the white men none at all.

When, however, the immediate future looked dark indeed, the schooner *Gipsy,* which had been chartered to carry supplies to the Grey, hove into sight, and later entered the river (March 5th, 1860), all was well. Nineteen days after Mackay's arrival at the pa, Von Haast and his party also reached that haven of refuge, in a starving condition, and that night for the first time in the history of Old Westland a party of white men—Mackay, Mackley, Von Haast and James Burnett—foregathered and ate to repletion of good life-giving food, so different from the fern root and occasional eel that the explorers had been forced for some time to subsist upon.

Mackay at once opened negotiations with Tarapuhi as chief of the coastal natives, with the result that it was agreed to convene a meeting of all the tribes to take place at the Poherua Lagoon, near Okarito, which was situated some one hundred and forty miles south of the Mawhera Pa. Accordingly, Mackay, Mackley and James Burnett set out on their tramp to the place appointed, and with

them went Tainui and the whole of the local tribe — men, women and children. They travelled down the coast by easy stages, picking up the natives resident at the Taramakau, Arahura and Hokitika Pas en route. Mackay, known to the Maoris as "Karamea," travelled in flax sandals, having worn his boots off his feet. He, like Thomas Brunner, had overcome the difficulty of "walking barefoot."

On their arrival at the pa the usual feast of welcome was tendered to the visitors. This lasted several days, after which the real business of the meeting was commenced. Mackay addressed the gathering at length, conveying to those present the Governor's greetings and good wishes, and finally offering three hundred golden sovereigns (the canny Scotsman) for their lands, subject to certain reserves being set aside. This offer was accepted, and James Mackay and Mackley, accompanied by some of the leading chiefs, at once set out for Bruce Bay, another forty miles south, where they met some Maori women who had not previously seen a white man. These ladies took a great fancy to Mackay's English-made clothes, and suggested that he leave them behind him. A quick getaway on his part ended a very embarrassing situation. The necessary reserves having been defined to the satisfaction of the Maoris, they returned to

Mawhera, which was duly accomplished without further incident. On arrival at the pa there was more feasting prior to the signing of the deed of sale. When this was concluded the fourteen Maori chiefs present affixed their signatures by making a cross, Messrs. Mackley, Burnett and seven Maoris from Collingwood acting as witnesses and James Mackay signing on behalf of Queen Victoria. These legal formalities having been completed, the three hundred sovereigns were paid over and the business concluded.

The following is a copy of the original document which is of great historical importance:

This Deed, written on this 21st day of May, in the year of our Lord, 1860, is a full and final sale conveyance and surrender by us the Chiefs and people of the Tribe Ngaitahu, whose names are hereunto subscribed: And witnesseth that on behalf of ourselves, our relatives and descendants we have, by signing this Deed under the shining sun of this day, parted with and for ever transferred unto Victoria Queen of England, Her Heirs, the Kings and Queens that may succeed Her and their Assigns for ever in consideration of the sum of three hundred pounds (£300) to us paid by James Mackay, junr., on behalf of the Queen Victoria (and we hereby acknowledge the receipt of the said moneys) all that piece of our land situate

in the Provinces of Nelson, Canterbury and Otago, and named Poutini, Arahaura, the boundaries whereof are set forth at the foot of this Deed and a plan of which Land is annexed thereto, with its trees, minerals, waters, rivers, lakes, streams and interests whatsoever thereon. To hold to Queen Victoria Her Heirs and Assigns as a lasting possession absolutely for ever and ever. And in testimony of our consent to all the conditions of this Deed we have hereunto subscribed our names and marks. And in testimony of the consent of the Queen of England on her part to all the conditions of this Deed the name of James Mackay, junr., Commissioner, is hereunto subscribed.

These are the boundaries of the land commencing at the seaside at Piopiotai (Milford Haven), thence proceeding inland to the snowy mountains of Taumora, thence to the mountains, Tioripatea, Haorange (Mount Cook), Terao-o-Tama, thence to the saddle of the source of the river Teremakau,* thence to Mount Wakarewa, thence following the range of mountains to the lake Roterua, thence to the source of the rivers Karamea and Wakapoai, thence by a straight line drawn in a southerly direction. The sea coast is the boundary of Piopiotai (Milford Haven) where the boundaries meet. There are certain lands

* Teremakau as spelt in the deed.

within this block reserved for sale; these are described in schedule A and B attached to this Deed.

(Signed) JAMES MACKAY,
Assistant Native Secretary.

Then follow these signatures, the Maori names in each case being signed with a mark, thus × Kinihi, Kerei, Kaurri Mokohuruhuru, Pako, Wiremu Parata, Pauha-te-Rangi, Taraphi-te-Kaukihi, Mere-te-Aowangi, Werita Tainui, Hakiaha, Taona, Purua, Makarini Tohi, Arapata Horau, Rewai Kaihi. Witnesses to the payment and signatures, James Mackay, Junior, Assistant Native Secretary, acting for Land Purchase Commissioner; Samuel M. Mackley, Settler, Nelson; James Burnett, Surveyor, Nelson; Tamati Pirimona, Collingwood; Hori-te-Kirama, Collingwood. Received this 21st day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty, the sum of £300 sterling, being the £300 consideration money expressed in the above written Deed to be paid by James Mackay, Junior, on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, to us.

Witnesses, James Mackay, Junior, Assistant Native Secretary for Land Purchase Commissioner, Samuel M. Mackley, Settler, Nelson; James Burnett, Surveyor, Nelson; Tamati Poumona, Native Chief, Collingwood; Hori-te-Kirama, Native Chief, Parapara, Col-

lingwood; Tarapuhi, Werita Tainui, Hokiaha Toana, Makarini Tohi, Arapata Horau, Kiwai, Kaihi, Kinihi-te-kau, Kerei, Kawiri Moko-huruhuru, Pauha-te-Rangi.

After completing the sale, Mackay, Mackley and the seven Maoris from Collingwood set out for Nelson by way of the coastal route, and in attempting to cross the Grey River, which was in heavy flood, the explorers' canoe capsized. Mackay at this time had the deed of purchase, the field books of the reserve surveys, and the remaining hundred sovereigns in a leather dispatch box in his swag, which was very heavy. He with great difficulty retained his hold of it until he reached the overturned canoe which later was washed ashore just south of where the town of Cobden now stands. He afterwards received a "please explain" from a Government armchair official who complained of the "slovenly and dirty appearance of the deed and papers attached thereto," and suggested that "he should be more careful in the future."

When Messrs. Mackay and Mackley reached the Buller, they found a party of twenty Europeans who had arrived in a vessel from Lyttelton in search of gold, the report that the precious metal had there been found by John Rochfort having got abroad. These early gold seekers were dissatisfied with their prospects, and wished to return to civilization, little

dreaming at that period of the vast quantity of gold which was afterwards to be found at the Buller and on the West Coast generally. Mackay, seeing the plight these miners were in, offered to pilot them to Nelson, and took them overland from the mouth of the Heaphy, crossing the saddle between that river and the Aorere, and so to their destination.

Mackay's last exploring expedition to the Coast was in 1862 in company with Messrs. John and Arthur Knyvett, when they blazed a saddle line from the Upper Aorere, Collingwood, to the mouth of the Heaphy River. On this occasion Mackay left his companions at the River Karamea and travelled on foot, from there to Westport in one day.

James Mackay paid some visits to Westport at a later date as Magistrate and Warden, but finally left the West Coast in July, 1863, on the outbreak of war in the Waikato. His services there were principally confined to persuading rebels to surrender and taking possession of their arms and ammunition. In May, 1864, he was appointed Civil Commissioner for the Hauraki District, where he remained until 1867, when after protracted negotiations with the natives he opened the Thames goldfields to the general public. In 1880 he returned to Westland where he held the office of Resident Magistrate and Warden at Greymouth until 1881.

Samuel Meggitt Mackley, shortly after reaching Nelson, returned again to the West Coast and settled at Waipuna, Grey Valley. G. W. H. Lee, who had made the alpine crossing under the guidance of the Chief Tainui, also took up land in the same locality, both holdings being stocked with sheep in 1863. Messrs. Mackley and Lee thus became the pioneer agriculturists of the West Coast, and Mrs. Mackley the first white woman resident.

Did Mackay know of the fabulous richness of Old Westland's gold deposits prior to its purchase from the natives?

This question was ever a bone of contention with old time diggers, who displayed an intense and lasting interest in the subject, and the writer, when a youth, can well remember hearing many discussions pertaining thereto. At this time the author's father, who was an early surveyor employed by the Canterbury Provincial Government (his name being perpetuated in the Lord Range, South Westland, and Lord Street, Greymouth), was practising his profession privately, and had a party of men who had all been through the hectic days of the various rushes. They were of all stations in life, and had a wonderful knowledge of the golden days of the mid-sixties, which they described at great length during bad weather and in the long evenings round the camp fire. There it was ever the author's delight to

sojourn, and thrill when listening to their tales of "Dick" Seddon, "Big" Revell, Reuben Waite, "Honest John" Hudson, the elusive Albert Hunt, stormy petrel of the diggings, Gentleman George, Ah Sue, the wily Chinese, and many other characters who played prominent parts in Old Westland's Golden Drama. Yet after all these stories had been told, the conversation would always swing back to "Jimmie" Mackay, and the famous sale.

Of course this took place about five years before the arrival of this party of men, and Mackay had left the district. Still, the natives who had sold were still there and their version was eagerly sought.

It was generally considered impossible for Mackay not to have known of the gold. The Oakes brothers and Messrs. Harper and Locke had reported it to the Canterbury Provincial Government three years before the sale, the *Nelson Examiner* had actually published the fact that the Maori brothers Tarapuhi and Tainui had found it "in abundance" in 1858, and most important of all, Mackay's friend, John Rochfort, had reported its discovery at the Old Diggings a year later. Again, Mackay was a Goldfields' Warden, and as such was known to have a good knowledge of the metal royal. Further, Von Haast and his assistant, James Burnett, were on the spot, and surely, if only for curiosity, must have panned

a dish or two of wash and by so doing proved that gold was existent everywhere. This being so, it was held that "Mackay did not play the game with the natives," going as far as to give £100 less than he was authorised to, even though he had the money with him.

On the other hand it was contended the explorer had no knowledge of the gold. Brunner had reported that Westland "was worthless," and Mackay had accepted this statement. Apart from this it was pointed out that Governor Gore Browne had laid it down that reserves amounting to ten thousand acres were to be set aside, holding that the territory (comprising seven and a half million acres) was of no use to the few natives who then occupied it, and that it would be better to make good reserves which would, by the profitable occupation of the remainder of the land by Europeans, be of more ultimate value than the whole waste untenanted district then was. It was also considered that if the natives had been paid a large sum in cash they would soon have been penniless. No, it was better to set aside adequate reserves and so conserve the Maori interest, and time has proved this to be correct, for when the rentals were finally fixed it was found that the natives were to receive £5,300 annually, and as eighty years will have elapsed from the date of the sale until Centenary Year, 1940, the sum of £424,000 will

have been paid, and will continue to be paid through the years to be, for though Maoris may come and Maoris may go, the rent goes on for ever.

It is of interest to state that the greatest portion of this huge amount has been paid by the business community of Greymouth, and noteworthy too, that this rapidly extending town is now, for the most part, being built on land outside the Native Reserve, the Maori rents being considered excessive.

Chapter VIII

Reuben Waite—The Existence of Gold Reported —The First Prospectors — £1,000 Reward for the Discovery of a Payable Goldfield—Henry Whitcombe—Death of Whitcombe.

Henry Whitcombe

Apart from its importance as marking Mackay's purchase from the natives, 1860 is also notable for the fact that this year Reuben Waite, pioneer storekeeper of the West Coast, established himself at Westport. How and why he came to do so is admirably described by Mr. Justice O'Regan, an outstanding authority on West Coast history, in an article contributed to "Te Wai Pounamu," an earlier publication of the writer's, wherein he states, *inter alia*:

"The earliest discovery of alluvial gold in New Zealand was made at Collingwood in the year 1856, and we first hear of Mr. Reuben Waite at Collingwood, where he kept a store. He was an Englishman by birth, and I have heard him say that he served his time to the trade of stonemason. He arrived first in

Australia, and came to New Zealand from Victoria, but I am unable to state when he arrived in this country.

"Waite wrote a small pamphlet in 1869 entitled 'A Narrative of the Discovery of the West Coast Goldfields,' edited by W. H. L. Leach, printed at the office of the *Nelson Examiner,* and published by J. Hounsell, bookseller and stationer, of Nelson, and I possess a copy thereof presented to me by the late Mr. Turnbull, founder of the Turnbull Library. He states that in or about the month of May, 1860, he was on the Collingwood goldfields when a party of Maoris came overland from the Buller River by travelling up the coast, and thence by the Aorere to Collingwood, bringing with them a parcel of gold which they said they had obtained some twenty miles up the Buller. The author adds that the gold was a splendid sample, and that upon seeing it, he conceived the idea of organising a prospecting expedition to the West Coast. Here let me state that I have reason to believe it was in the month of April, 1860, that the party of Maoris brought the gold to Collingwood, and Waite himself does not appear to be exact about the date when he fixes it at in or about the month of May. The Maoris had gone to the West Coast in search of gold, because they had acquired at Collingwood a knowledge of the somewhat primitive methods of gold digging in vogue in

those days, and, as many of them were familiar with the West Coast, they were struck by the resemblance of the gold-bearing gravel or 'wash,' as it was called, to that which they had seen in their travels farther south. It is interesting to remark in passing that the Englishman, William Hammond Hargreaves, was likewise so much impressed by the similarity of the gold-bearing gravels in the 'placer' diggings in California to that which he had seen in New South Wales, that he made the journey back to Australia and discovered payable gold on the Turon in February, 1851.

"According to Waite's account, he experienced very little encouragement from the people of Nelson to whom he mentioned his project. Indeed, he states that they laughed at the undertaking, and described him and his companion, Mr. Saunders Rogers, as 'madmen from Victoria.' However, he called a meeting of gold-diggers and laid his plan before them, and ultimately a party was formed who chartered the ketch *Jane,* and engaged Captain Jacobsen to take the party to the Buller. Apparently not more than seventeen persons embarked from Collingwood. The little vessel grounded at Farewell Spit, but was ultimately got off successfully, and the party entered the Buller safely two days later. Waite does not give us the exact date, but it was certainly in the month of June, 1860. Several of the party,

including Waite himself, attempted to ascend the Buller in the ship's boat with the object of reaching the spot described by the Maoris, but after four days 'battling with the current' the journey was abandoned. On Waite's return to the river mouth with his companions he learnt that certain Maoris had discovered payable gold in the Waimangaroa, and he was shown a small nugget. Waite immediately embarked for Nelson for the purpose of bringing fresh supplies, and he appears to have experienced rough weather, because sixteen days elapsed before the little craft reached her destination. He placed a number of nuggets in a jeweller's window at Nelson, and some interest appears to have been excited amongst the people there. In due course Waite returned to the Buller and opened a store there.

"The existence of gold in the Buller had been discovered by Mr. John Rochfort, surveyor, who obtained several small pieces of the precious metal at the Old Diggings in November, 1859. This spot is opposite the site of the wayside accommodation house known at Berlin's. The Maoris who brought the sample to Collingwood, however, were the first to obtain gold in payable quantities on the West Coast, and from the time of their finding it in 1860 gold was obtained continuously. It is thus abundantly evident that payable gold was got on the West Coast several years before the

discovery of the Greenstone Diggings, also made by the Maoris in 1864.

"From the present site of Westport, diggers penetrated in various directions, and as early as 1862 payable gold was discovered at Lyell by Maoris. Waite's store at Westport appears to have been the chief source of supplies for those venturesome and forgotten pioneers, but owing to the discovery of gold in Otago, attention was diverted from the West Coast until January, 1862, when the steamer *Tasmanian Maid* (Captain Whitwell) came to the Buller from Dunedin with a great number of diggers on board."

Reverting from this second interlude, it is necessary to observe that after Mackay's departure the Canterbury Provincial Government proceeded but slowly with the exploration of Westland, and the year 1861 was uneventful. In view of what transpired in 1862, however, it is necessary to outline briefly the reasons which forced the Provincial Government into offering a reward of £1,000 for the discovery of a payable goldfield.

To do so adequately let it first be noted that the discovery of gold by Hargreaves in New South Wales in 1851 gave a great impetus to the quest for the metal royal, which extended not only to other parts of Australia but also to this Dominion, prospectors crossing the Tasman and trying their luck in many parts.

The first definite result of these activities was that Charles Ring, in 1852, located auriferous quartz at Kapanga Creek, Coromandel, and applied for the reward of £500 which had been offered by a group of Auckland men for the discovery of payable gold. About a hundred men rushed the field, Colonel Wynyard, who was then Lieutenant-Governor, having made arrangements with the Maoris to permit the search for gold on their lands. Operations, however, did not meet with immediate success, and many miners left to follow rushes which occurred at Collingwood, in 1857, where William Lightband had discovered rich alluvial deposits, the first in New Zealand, and at Tuapeka (Lawrence), Otago, where in 1861 Gabriel Read made known to Major Richardson, then Superintendent of that Province, that, "for ten hours' work with a butcher's knife and a pan, he was enabled to collect 7 ozs. of gold." As soon as the news of this fabulous find became generally known a mighty rush set in, thousands upon thousands of gold miners swarming all over Otago, and winning from 1861 to 1863 gold to the value of almost £5,000,000.

This great discovery, together with the fact that as early as 1857 gold to the value of £40,000 had been won in Auckland and Nelson, forced the Provincial Government to

take action, and, as has been stated, to offer the reward of £1,000 for the discovery of a payable field in Canterbury.

In the hope of obtaining this reward a party of prospectors, Messrs. Smart, French, Cook, Ferguson, Day and Everest, started out from Christchurch in September, 1862, and traversed the eastern side of the Divide, but obtained no gold whatsoever. Later, Smart, French and Day crossed over to Lake Brunner, and in January, 1863, when travelling down the Taramakau River, Day picked up a piece of water-worn gold as big as a shilling, probably the first obtained in this part of Westland. Proceeding to the Greenstone Creek, where they found Maoris at work, they obtained good prospects, but a shortage of food hampered their operations. About this time R. A. Sherrin, a noted prospector, also visited Westland and reported finding gold in many places.

The operations of the prospectors thus being of an encouraging nature, the Provincial Government in 1863 decided to dispatch surveyors to Lake Brunner for the purpose of cutting tracks in the vicinity, and down the Taramakau River to the sea, their object being to assist in every way the various parties who were prospecting in the neighbourhood. Messrs. Howitt, Drake and Dobson were the officers in charge. The governing authority also decided to detail another of their sur-

veyors, Henry Whitcombe, to proceed to the West Coast by way of the pass that to-day bears his name. This ill-starred explorer was accompanied by a Swiss named Lauper, whose diary of the exploration was translated and published in the *Canterbury Provincial Gazette* of July 6th, 1863. The following account of this expedition is taken therefrom:

On April 13th Henry Whitcombe and Jacob Lauper, accompanied by two other men, together with horses and a cart containing 200 lbs. of biscuits, tea, sugar, a quarter of mutton, tents, ropes, hatchets, rat traps, etc., left Christchurch with a view to discovering a practicable pass from the head waters of the Rakaia to the West Coast, proceeding by way of the Woolshed Hill, situated about four miles above the confluence of the Rakaia and Wilberforce Rivers. As the country began to get rough Whitcombe decided to leave the cart and some of the biscuits behind, and when they drew close to the ranges the two men were instructed to go back to Christchurch, get the horses shod, return to a camping ground near the Taramakau Saddle, and await the arrival of Whitcombe and Lauper, who went on with the exploration, carrying a small stock of provisions and agreeing to subsist on two biscuits each a day, it being considered that they would reach the coast in two weeks' time.

For the first ten days the weather was all that could be desired, then it suddenly changed, rain and snow falling heavily, which apart from delaying their progress, saturated their biscuits which became a mass of wet dough. Having left their tent behind, they were exposed to the full fury of the elements and suffered very severely.

On the 24th they reached some rocks in the river, which it was necessary to cross; "here the boulders were of enormous size, and there was a deep whirlpool where the water boiled, hissed and foamed like a witch's cauldron." This appeared impossible to cross, the sides being perpendicular; but to return was even more difficult, as a great depth of snow must have fallen on the pass since they had crossed over. Lauper, however, had had experience of difficulties amongst his native Swiss mountains, and, seeing the point of a rock projecting over the surface of the water, he fastened a rope to a small rock, which he placed in the water on the opposite side, then threw the other end on the projecting point, and lowered himself carefully down with his hands. He descended up to the chin in the whirlpool, but, as he could find no bottom, he drew himself back on to the rock. Perceiving a small hollow in the side of the rock, about a foot above the water, where he could just place half the length of his finger, he

determined with the aid of that to get across, and directed Whitcombe to push the rope on top over the side wall. Then, though up to the neck in water, he managed to reach the side and the little notch in the wall, let go the rope and hold fast. He had no trouble in crossing over; being deep the water supported him, so that he could hold himself up with one finger. He got to the next rock with ease, and then scrambled into the bush, where he cut three long saplings, by the aid of which, and with the assistance of Lauper, Whitcombe managed to overcome that perilous descent, the least mistake in which would have meant almost instantaneous death.

The next day they came to a place where the river fell straight down over a high rock, spreading out broad and deep at the bottom. They scrambled on, but managed to advance in ten hours, with the hardest work, only about two hundred yards. The rain continuing, it was impossible to light a fire that night and their food by this time was sodden, sour and unpalatable. They slept close together to keep themselves warm, and Lauper noted that Whitcombe trembled very much. Three days later Lauper observed some splendid looking wash dirt and tried out two handfuls in the lid of the billy, getting the colour freely. He then tried more, obtaining in all two grains of fine gold, Whitcombe exclaiming, "That

will do, Jacob, we will claim the reward." The weather continued bad and it was very cold. The following day they could hear the roar of the sea and pushed on, but could not reach the coast and were forced to camp again in the bush. Next morning they were early astir and in crossing a low hill Lauper slid about ten feet into the bed of the river. Whilst in the act of doing so, the bag in which he carried the biscuits caught in the branch of a tree, which tore it in two, and they lost half of their small store—a misfortune which had happened once before. They then reached a swampy place and had to make a circuit of many miles through dense scrub, which scratched and tore their hands and faces. Weary to death they lay down and were half frozen with cold that night, for they had not the energy to make a fire. The next day the same difficulties were met with, and they vainly endeavoured to reach the sea coast, but night overtook them. They could, however, see the shore distinctly—it was not more than a dozen miles away.

The rain still poured down incessantly, and though they had but one handful of dough left —not enough for one man—they decided to finish it as they hoped to find a Maori on the beach, who had on a previous occasion supplied Lauper (who was then accompanied by the surveyor Drake) with eels and potatoes. They

were too cold to sleep, and early next morning continued their journey through the dense scrub without a morsel of food of any kind. They reached the beach about four that afternoon, Lauper recognising the place as the mouth of the Hokitika River. They were very weary and hungry, but in good spirits, thinking their sufferings were nearly at an end.

They made a large fire and dried their blankets for the first time for thirteen days—the period occupied in travelling from the head of the Rakaia. They had been wet through all that time, and during the journey had failed to catch either an eel, a bird or even a rat. Next day as no Maoris were to be found they proceeded north along the beach to the Arahura River, which Lauper in his diary calls the Brunner River. Here again they found no natives, the pa being deserted, and all the food they could find was a handful of small potatoes and a little Maori cabbage. While this poor fare was being cooked Whitcombe, utterly exhausted, fell asleep, and when he awoke he remarked, "You have lost a good deal of flesh, Jacob. How do I look? I feel very weak and very hungry."

Lauper did his best to cheer him up but it was evident he was in a very bad way. They then ate their last meal together . . . . Whitcombe insisted on proceeding, being very anxious to reach the Taramakau, which was

only nine miles away. It was with the utmost difficulty that they crossed the Arahura, both holding on to a strong stick, Maori fashion, so being of mutual assistance one to the other. Having crossed when the tide was out the going on the beach was good and shortly after midnight they reached their objective. The next morning they could see the pa on the opposite side, but no sign of life. After waiting for some time, hoping against hope that the Maoris would put in an appearance, Whitcombe said: "You perceive, Jacob, there is no one to give us any assistance; we must get across somehow, or we will starve to death."

Lauper stated that the river was not fordable, but Whitcombe insisted on attempting to cross. He proposed building a raft, but this idea was discarded when they found two old canoes which they lashed together. They pushed out into the stream and the current, which was very swift, whirled them rapidly towards the sea. The canoes, filling quickly, began to sink. Whitcombe took off his coat and prepared to swim ashore, telling Lauper to leave the canoes or he would be drowned. He then made a great leap into the stream and Lauper saw him swimming with powerful strokes towards the south bank, which was still nearest to that portion of the river where the canoes had filled and capsized. Lauper, meantime, was in a desperate plight. A poor swimmer at any time,

he could do nothing but hold fast to the canoes which were soon swept into the breakers and tossed about in all directions. After a very severe buffeting he was washed ashore by a huge wave and managed to hold on to a pile of driftwood until the water receded. Exhausted he lay there all night, and in the morning found that he was about a mile south of the river they had attempted to cross. Travelling along the beach with great difficulty, he found the coat Whitcombe had thrown into the river, a parcel of tobacco, some blankets and the canoes. A little further on he saw a pair of boots showing above the sand, and approaching closer was horrified to observe the body of his companion.

Henry Whitcombe was dead . . . . the first known victim of the treacherous Taramakau, the river responsible for the lives of innumerable diggers, who, in endeavouring to pass through its snow-fed waters, met with a similar fate. These unfortunate,and in many cases foolhardy men, were, in the vernacular of the day, said to have died the National Death, so great was the toll of the roaring rivers of the land wherein they wooed fickle fortune and lost their all.

With his hands Lauper dug a shallow grave above high water mark, and there reverently laid to rest the first Government official to lay down his life, in the execution of his duty, in Westland.

Chapter IX

Lauper Reaches Lake Brunner — Attempts to Reach Westland from Otago—The Caples and Pyke and Clarke Expeditions—Charles Townsend Reaches the Grey — Establishment of Depôt.

Vincent Pyke

Lauper, unable to cross the Taramakau and so proceed to the Grey, decided to ascend that river and make for Lake Brunner where he knew that there were three survey parties cutting tracks. The first day he made but little progress, being very weak and ill and without food. As a matter of fact he was starving. That night he heard the bark of a dog and pushing through the scrub came across a Maori with his wife and child. The natives had but little food for themselves, but after Lauper had told his story and given the man four sticks of tobacco he received two small potatoes which, he states, "tasted delicious." That night the Maori caught a few small fish in a fixed net, three of which with a

couple of potatoes he gave Lauper. The following day he proceeded up the river, meeting, towards evening, a canoe containing five Maoris coming down stream. The natives were on their way to the Buller, but had no food. They put Lauper across and that night he reached a Maori camp where two men and their wives were residing. They had little food, but gave him a piece of woodhen. He slept that night in the hut, and after giving the Maoris some tobacco, went on his way. Next day he heard someone chopping, and a few minutes later he was in the midst of Howitt's survey party and once more amongst friends, who attended to his wants, giving him clothing as well as food. Howitt supplied him with a horse and put him across the lake in a canoe. Two days later he joined the men who had been instructed to wait at the Taramakau Saddle by Whitcombe, but so worn and ill was he that they did not recognise him. The return journey to Taylor's Station was then made, from whence the news of Whitcombe's death was sent post haste to Christchurch. After resting a day or two Lauper and his companions reached headquarters.

The Canterbury Provincial Government after placing on record their sympathy, and their appreciation of Whitcombe's services, voted his family the sum of £1,000. To Lauper, his faithful friend, they gave £100, in recognition

of his sterling worth. In April, 1864, Whitcombe's body was removed from the place where Lauper had buried it, and interred in the Karoro Cemetery, Greymouth.

Whitcombe Pass, and Whitcombe Quay, Blaketown, Greymouth, perpetuate the name of this unfortunate explorer.

Apart from the interest shown by the Canterbury and Nelson Provincial Governments in the West Coast, the Otago Provincial Government was also alive to its potentialities, and after the discovery of gold at the Shotover, Arrowtown and Wakatipu, many attempts were made to discover a practicable route. In January, 1863, a wonderful effort was made by Mr. Q. Caples, afterwards well known in Reefton as one of the most enterprising and successful miners in New Zealand. This daring man set out alone, without gun or map, and crossed the mountains at the head of the Dart River, cutting steps in the glaciers with a shovel, and descending the western watershed to a river which he called the Hollyford. Want of provisions compelled him to retreat, and while so doing he was forced to live upon native rats which were very plentiful. Re-equipping, he again set out and succeeded in crossing the ranges near the source of the Greenstone River, proceeding along the Hollyford to Martin's Bay. The creeks and river beaches in that locality

were carefully prospected and one of the tributaries of the Hollyford he named Pyke's Creek, in honour of Vincent Pyke, then Warden and Goldfields Secretary, who was later a member of the House of Representatives. He found two coarse specks of gold, but failed to discover more. Caples furnished a very interesting report of his explorations, and also a sketch map, which subsequent surveys proved to be very accurate, considering that his sole equipment consisted of a small pocket compass.

About the same time a party consisting of Messrs. Barrington, Simonin and Farrell made several trips from Queenstown towards Jackson's Bay with a view to prospecting extensively. On one occasion they endured great privations, one of them being lost for six days, during which time he had no food of any sort. When they again reached Lake Wakatipu they were in a deplorable condition. Constable Winter, the resident police officer in charge, reported that they "presented the appearance of living skeletons." Barrington stated that he had discovered some quartz reefs during this trip, and a small vessel was built and fitted out to take himself and party back to Jackson's Bay. On arrival the reef was duly located, but upon examination was not considered payable. Though a great deal of prospecting was carried out but little gold

was found. Even the beaches were reported to be very poor, and were calculated to yield a return of only 7s. 6d. a day, per man, which was not a payable proposition when mining was carried out by the primitive methods then pertaining. After remaining some considerable time at and around the bay, this party, in December, 1864, sailed north and duly reached the Grey.

The most important expedition from Otago, however, was carried out by Vincent Pyke and a mining surveyor named Coates, who had in attendance three experienced men. This party was indeed well equipped, and had as beasts of burden two mules and two horses. They set out from the Dunstan on August 28th, 1865, with a view to finding a practicable road-line to the West Coast via Lake Wanaka. Two days after starting they met Hai Monare Weti (generally known on the Otago goldfields as Maori Jack), who was engaged to accompany the expedition. At the outset very bad weather prevailed and it rained incessantly for several days. When the explorers reached the Haast their progress was barred by an almost unbroken series of rocky gorges, through which the river foamed in a succession of cascades and rapids for a distance of from ten to twelve miles.

As they were afraid their provisions would not hold out while a road was being made for

the mules, they decided to turn them loose, the track being blocked so that the animals would be found on the return of the party; but to their great disappointment when they did return they found that the mules had broken through and crossed the Fish Stream, being later found at the head of Lake Wanaka.

So broken was the country through which the party had now to pass, that it was necessary to ford the Haast fourteen times in one day. After leaving their tenth camp they were unable to find sufficient level ground on which to pitch the tents. As a result of being thus exposed to the weather the leader caught a chill through lying in a pool of water that had collected during the night, the consequence being that he suffered for three days from an acute attack of gout and could only travel with great difficulty. Fording the Haast to the right bank above its junction with the Burke, the party came on an old camp, and found carved on a tree, "Nugget Prospecting Party, Sep. 3, 1863." The river now ran nearly eight miles between wide flats, some of which were grassed. From its junction with the Clarke the Haast riverbed widened in places to almost two miles, and the going was consequently much better. They reached the coast on October 2nd, thirty-five days after leaving the Dunstan.

Here they rested for three days, not daring to remain longer as by this time their provisions were reduced to twenty pannikins of flour and meal and a little tea and sugar. They kept an anxious lookout for passing vessels but without avail; and did not know until their return that diggers at this time were at Jackson Bay. They commenced their homeward journey on October 5th, the Haast being much higher than previously. When they reached the Clarke two men were sent across to get some food that had been left there. Unfortunately, when returning, one of them lost his footing and his life being in danger, he cast off his swag which contained almost all their food. Luckily a packet of flour about six pound in weight was recovered, and that with a little meal was all they had to see them through. The weather now was of the cruellest kind, and when they reached the Fish Stream it was found to be unfordable—a veritable death trap, which they dare not attempt to cross.

An endeavour was made to fell a tree to bridge its narrowest part, and though they persisted all day in trying to do so, they were unsuccessful. During this time, "an unceasing downpour so chilled them as to induce a drowsy lethargy of the most painful description." Their last biscuit having been consumed, with desperate energy tree after tree

was felled in a vain effort to throw one across the raging torrent, but without avail. At last the idea was conceived to construct a rude ladder of saplings, and after making a precarious crossing by this means, they made good progress to the head of Lake Wanaka, which was reached on October 14th. Five days later they arrived at Clyde, the whole trip taking just over seven weeks. Auriferous indications were observed at various parts of the route, which was regarded as a practicable one, the distance being about 90 miles. This expedition was acclaimed as an outstanding contribution to the scanty knowledge then possessed of the country indicated, and Messrs. Pyke and Clarke were entertained at a public dinner, congratulated on their success and thanked on behalf of the province.

There were many other adventurous explorations in the early days. In Otago J. McKerrow, afterwards Surveyor-General, pushed westward the reconnaissance survey of the Lakes District, and back to the watershed of the Southern Alps, covering and mapping an area of 8,000 square miles in the two summer seasons of 1861-62 and 1862-63. Dr. Hector, too, traversed a huge stretch of country in his geological explorations, his predictions as to the deposits of gold being uncannily correct. As has been noted, Sir Julius Von Haast made a geological survey of the west coast of Nelson,

and subsequently of Westland, while Messrs. Walker and Hewitt of Canterbury also made trips to the western portion of that province.

Two years prior to the Pyke expedition, the Canterbury Provincial Government, now convinced of the existence of gold on the West Coast, sent the schooner *Wild Wave* (Buxton, master) to the Grey River with a general cargo of stores and provisions. Mr. Charles Townsend was appointed Resident Agent there, and he had under his leadership a party of three men, Peter Mitchelmore, John Smith and Solomon (a Maori). Townsend's instructions were to erect a depôt at the Grey to supply survey parties, prospectors, and any men requiring relief who might be travelling through to the Buller or back to Christchurch.

Captain Buxton who had not visited the West Coast previously did not know the whereabouts of the Grey, there of course being no charts then, and in an endeavour to find out where that particular river was, stood close in, and seeing some men on the beach put off in the ship's boat to make the necessary enquiries. He found the sea very rough, but managed to land on the beach near the site where Hokitika now stands, only to find that the Grey was about twenty miles to the north. He then tried to rejoin his ship, but the sea was too heavy to permit him to do so, and he was compelled to camp ashore that night.

Next morning there was no sign of the *Wild Wave,* which, however, hove into sight two days later, when another attempt was made to reach the little vessel, but without avail. On the following day he and Townshend decided to walk along the beach towards the Grey as the schooner appeared to be sailing in that direction. Two days later they reached their destination, and found the *Wild Wave* standing on and off the bar, which was very rough. The heavy seas continued until June 8th when the schooner managed to work the river entrance, after having a very narrow escape from being wrecked on the north beach. The *Wild Wave* was thus the third vessel to enter the Grey, not the first as generally stated. A start was at once made to erect the depôt, which was situated on the south bank of the river almost opposite Johnston Street, the actual site now being covered by twenty-five feet of water. This building was without doubt the first erected south of the Buller, and in Westland.

By way of a further interlude, it is essential to chronicle here an outstanding incident in Old Westland coastal history, for at this time the schooner *Gipsy* (Dixon, master) actually successfully entered the treacherous Taramakau, the first and only vessel ever to do so. This roaring river which was mistaken for the Grey was prospected during the little vessel's

stay, gold being found on the southern bank and close to the sea beach.

Meantime the Grey depôt, which was in the course of erection, was visited by Charlton Howitt and two of his men. They came from Lake Brunner, having run short of provisions. A few days later R. A. Sherrin and his prospecting party arrived from the Hokitika River, where they had obtained a little gold.

July, 1863, was a busy month at the Grey, for despite the fact that it was mid-winter, perhaps the worst month in the year, the pioneer prospectors continued their frenzied search for the gold they had reason to believe they would strike at any moment, and the depôt was the centre from which all activities radiated. Here on August 1st, the Grey River Post Office, the first in old Westland, was established, Charles Townsend being the first Post-master; he was succeeded by W. H. Revell, who, in 1865, handed over to Reuben Waite.

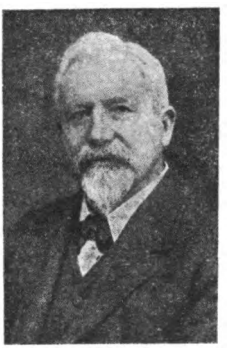
On August 6th Charles Townsend received information from Peter Mutu, a Maori, that Charlton Howitt and two of his survey hands had been drowned at Lake Brunner on the 4th. James Hammett, cook to the party, had been left in camp and he had arrived at the Taramakau with the dire news. Townsend met him the following day at the Saltwater (Paroa), some five miles south of the Grey. Five days later Hammett, accompanied by

Peter Mutu, set out for the Buller with dispatches and a report to the Canterbury Provincial Government relative to the death of Howitt. On August 14th, Townsend, together with Sherrin and his party, left for Lake Brunner in search of the bodies, but returned on September 17th, without finding any trace of them.

From what could be learned of this shocking fatality it would appear that Howitt and his men were eeling, using a canoe cut out of a green log which had but little freeboard, and which in a sudden squall (for which this lake is notorious) filled and sank. This early surveyor's parents were William and Mary Howitt, both well known in the literary world, the former's work, "The History of Discovery in Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand," being a most valuable contribution to colonial literature.

Chapter X

Albert William Hunt, Stormy Petrel of the Goldfields—Sir Arthur Dudley Dobson—Discovery of Arthur's Pass—Charles Townsend Drowned —End of 1863.



A. D. Dobson

Despite Howitt's untimely end, the Canterbury Provincial Government intensified the work of cutting tracks and opening up the country around Lake Brunner; Drake, who was already in the district, taking over Howitt's duties. (This early surveyor, his work completed in Westland, went north to Nelson, where, some years later, he too met his death by drowning.) The carrying out of these surveys necessarily meant the employment of several men, all of whom were keen prospectors, who, in bad weather, and during their leisure, did their utmost to locate gold, and thus gain the reward offered for the discovery of a payable field. Among those thus employed was a man named Albert William Hunt, a practical prospector, though a man of mystery who was destined to become,

as this story will reveal, the stormy petrel of Old Westland, a veritable will-of-the-wisp, with an uncanny flair for finding the precious metal. Hunt, who has been described by many writers as an Australian, was as a matter of fact a New Zealander—the son of an Epsom publican, who spent his youth in Auckland. Coming down to the South Island about 1862, he first tried his luck on the Collingwood goldfields, where he obtained the experience necessary to qualify as a first-class prospector. He then set out to explore many parts of the Grey district, and when his funds were exhausted, he joined up, as mentioned, with Drake's party, who were then engaged in cutting a track down the Hohonu River to its junction with the Taramakau. Hunt became very interested in this locality as a potential goldfield, and did a lot of prospecting in various places, getting very encouraging results, but failing for a time "to strike it rich." Other prospectors, too, were impressed with the possibilities of the Hohonu district, paying particular attention to the Greenstone Creek. Here Maoris were also at work and were successful in getting the "colour" almost everywhere. The country, however, was very rough, and food hard to obtain, and this combination of circumstances brought about the temporary retirement of all the Europeans in the locality with the exception of Albert Hunt.

Apart from the Provincial Government's activities at and around Lake Brunner, they in June, 1863, invited tenders for the survey of the West Coast and intervening country, from the Grey River to the southern boundary of the province, and A. D. (afterwards Sir Arthur Dudley) Dobson was the successful tenderer. Proceeding from Port Cooper to Nelson for the purpose of chartering a small vessel to convey him to the Coast, he experienced no difficulty in so doing, and soon made the necessary arrangements with Thomas Askew, a merchant and shipowner, to transport his party, their supplies and equipment to the Grey River, the vessel to be used being the schooner *Gipsy*, Captain Jack McCann in command. The voyage was a very protracted one, and although the little schooner sailed on August 7th, and was actually off the Grey on the 30th of the same month, she did not try to enter until September 13th, having been blown to sea. Sir Arthur, in "Reminiscences," thus describes this attempt, and the wreck of the *Gipsy*, the first to occur at Greymouth.

"On Sunday, September 13th, at high water we stood in to take the bar, with a light wind from the north-west. There was still a good roll on but it did not seem much until we began to approach the shore, some distance from which we found the rollers much heavier than we had anticipated, and our little schooner tossed about like a cork in the waves. The

wind, failing somewhat, was insufficient to keep way on the ship and when we got into the breakers it was impossible to steer. We were all stripped to our flannels, ready to swim if necessary. We were now slowly drifting towards the shore, and I was holding on to the running rigging, near the main mast. Carefully watching the seas I noticed a huge wave coming towards us. As it neared the ship, it seemed to rise up into a thin narrow edge, almost transparent at the top and flecked with a little white spray. It rose like a wall high above the bulwarks, then curled over, and the ship was covered with a mass of broken water. The small whaleboat was well bolted down to the deck, with strong chains, between the two masts, keel upwards. The wave ran over the top of this without breaking the chains, but the galley was swept away and the bulwarks broken off level with the deck. We were all now hanging on for dear life. If I had had any certainty that I was going to get ashore safely there would have been some enjoyment in the situation, for it was a very grand sight to see each wave of broken water rushing over us and throwing the ship nearer the shore. It seemed a very long time as wave after wave pounded us, but we had ample time to get a good breath between each submergence, though we were getting badly bruised by being knocked against the deck and masts, as the seas went surging by.

"The heavy rains had caused a flood in the river, we soon getting into dirty water and a strong current, which carried us rapidly northwards. Then a heavier sea than usual threw us right against the mass of drift timber which at that time covered the beach down to high water mark. We were now safe, but still hung on until the ship steadied herself against the driftwood, then we dropped off the bowsprit on to the shore.

"A big dog belonging to one of our passengers had already got there and was waiting for his master. As the tide was falling the *Gipsy* was soon firmly stranded, so we went aboard and got our clothes, which were stowed in the cabin and quite dry.

"On the beach we found Charles Townsend, John Smith (cook) and Peter Mitchelmore (carpenter) who had charge of a depot which had been established to assist prospectors. Sherrin and Price and a number of Maoris from the pa, which was called Mawhera, were all waiting to render assistance. Counting the natives there must have been thirty men available, and with the help of these the stores were soon landed, and everything moveable placed above high water mark before night set in. The *Gipsy* was so badly damaged that it was found impossible to repair her and many years later the wreck was destroyed by fire."

Sir Arthur at once proceeded to get his surveys under way, but being handicapped

through not speaking Maori he decided to learn something of the language. With this object in view he engaged a half-caste named Reid as a survey hand, and thanks to his instruction, plus the aid of a new testament, in Maori, found at the pa, he soon gained sufficient knowledge to carry on, and to correctly ascertain the native names of the physical features of the country. Commencing the traverse of the Coast, all went well for some time, then, owing to the fact that no less than seven men were drowned in seven months, Dobson's men became so disheartened that they decided to return to Christchurch, and implored him to accompany them before he too died the national death. This he refused to do, and putting the party in charge of a Maori guide sent them across the Alps, and so on to the Plains.

He then trained a number of Maoris, who, assured of regular payment and of plenty of good food and tobacco, were only too eager to give him all the assistance required. He carried on in this manner, making good progress, until early in 1864, when the natives, who had by this time a little money coming to them, made up their minds to visit Kaiapoi, in consequence of which he found himself without men and unable to proceed. He thereupon decided to cross the Alps to Christchurch, for the purpose of reporting progress to the Provincial Government, the trip over the divide

being made without incident, and it was during this visit that he discovered the pass that to-day commemorates his name.

On receiving his report the Provincial Government expressed great satisfaction at the progress made, and his contract was considerably extended. He was also instructed, prior to returning to the West Coast, to make an examination of the country on the east side of the main range, and to ascertain if there was a pass out of the Waimakariri watershed into any valleys running westward.

After a few days in Christchurch, on March 8th to be exact, Dobson and his brother George set out for the Upper Waimakariri, where the latter was engaged in setting out roads; on the 10th Craigieburn was reached, and here George Dobson remained, A. D. Dobson being joined by another brother, Edward, with whom he went on to Mr. Goldney's station, Grassmere.

Quoting again from "Reminiscences," Sir Arthur thus describes the actual discovery of the pass: "The next day we rode over the saddle into the valley and up the river bed until we came to a large stream running into the Waimakariri from the north-west. There seemed to be low country at its head. We camped in this valley at a point beyond which we could not take the horses. Next morning we went up the stream as far as possible, and then through the bush at the side, cutting our way with billhooks. It was hard work and

although we had very light swags, it took the greater part of the day to get out of the bush into the scrub, where we found we had arrived at a swampy valley, about a mile in length which had been the bed of a glacier. We pitched our tents in the scrub, and had a good meal, then went to the end of the flat, where we found the moraine, which had blocked the north end of this valley. The barometer registered about three thousand feet above sea level. This was evidently an available saddle, with very little difficulties on the east side; the heavy work would be on the west side where there was a very precipitous descent into a long narrow gorge, the head of the Otira River. The view was very beautiful looking up the forest-covered hillsides to the snow capped mountains on the north side of the Taramakau. The rata was in full bloom and its red blossoms made a brilliant contrast to the dark foliage of the birch trees. We found the descent from the moraine for the first five hundred feet exceedingly steep, but there was sufficient width in the valley to allow a zig-zag cutting to be made into the head of the gorge, beyond which a good deal of heavy rock cutting would be required to make a dray road. In this respect it much resembled the Hurunui Saddle, where the eastern approach is comparatively easy, and the western side drops suddenly. . . . . Returning to Christchurch, I made a sketch of the country I had been over, and handed it with

a report to the Chief Surveyor. I did not name this pass, but when the gold diggings commenced on the West Coast a committee of business men offered a prize of £200 for anyone who could find a better or more suitable pass, and at the same time my brother George was sent out to examine every available pass between the watershed of the Taramakau, Waimakariri and Hurunui.

"He carefully examined the pass at the head of every valley, and reported that Arthur's Pass was by far the most suitable for a direct road to the Coast; hence the name by which it has been known ever since."

On April 6th, Dobson set out for the Coast again. He had engaged a new survey party consisting of four Europeans, and had also purchased two horses and a mule. During this crossing he made a survey of the south branch of the Hurunui, after the completion of which good progress was made, the Coast being reached on the 22nd, and transport being greatly facilitated by the presence of the horses, which were the first to arrive in Westland.

At the Grey, Dobson found John Rochfort who had built a hut there, and stayed with him over the weekend, thus obtaining a much required rest. A most methodical man, particular to a degree as to food supplies, and having boats or canoes built for all river work, Dobson was the one surveyor of Old Westland

who took no chances, and in consequence had few difficulties, and no serious ones.

After some six years' service, during which many important works were carried out, he was in April, 1869, appointed District Engineer on the Nelson-West Coast Goldfields, with headquarters at Westport. Two years later, in 1871, John Blackett, Provincial Engineer for Nelson, was appointed Chief Engineer to the General Government, and Dobson was promoted to be Provincial Engineer in his stead.

A few months afterwards, Henry Lewis, his father-in-law, who was Chief Surveyor for the Nelson Province, retired, and as the principal work of the survey department lay in the West Coast Goldfields, Dobson was invited to take over this position also, and on so doing was appointed Chief Surveyor. This dual appointment he held until 1875, when he resigned, being immediately appointed District Engineer attached to the Public Works Department. Three years later he again resigned for the purpose of joining his father in Christchurch, there then being more work than Dobson senior could cope with. Thus after fifteen years of good and faithful service, did this very distinguished pioneer sever his connection with the West Coast Goldfields.

The history of the Dobson family is irrefutably interwoven with the story of Old Westland, for apart from his own honourable connection, Sir Arthur's father, Edward Dobson,

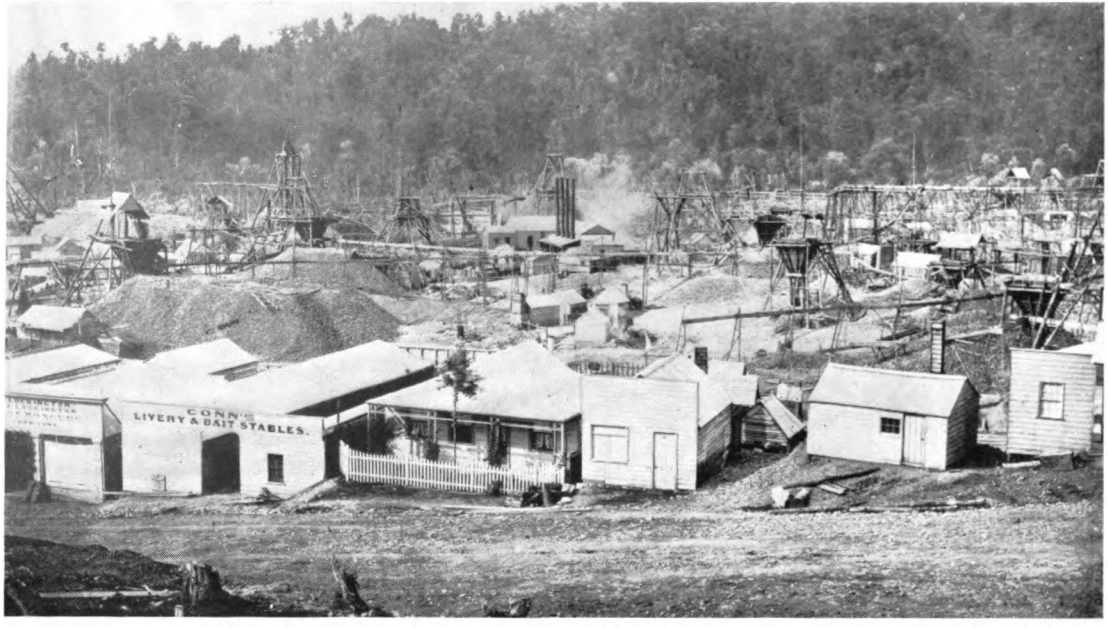
was Engineer to the Canterbury Provincial Government when Westland was part of that province, and it was he who was responsible for the construction of the West Coast Road in 1866. In addition to this Sir Arthur's ill-fated brother, George Dobson—a road engineer —was murdered on the southern bank of the Grey River by the infamous Burgess-Sullivan gang of bushrangers, when in the execution of his duty.

Sir Arthur himself crossed the last divide on March 5th, 1934. He had attained the great age of 92 years. He was buried at the Linwood Cemetery, Christchurch. A "Canterbury Pilgrim," having arrived by the *Cressy*, one of the First Four Ships, he had been described as a "veteran path finder." A fitting tribute to a man who blazed the trail for us of to-day.

In recognition of his pioneering work a memorial obelisk has been erected on the summit of Arthur's Pass. Standing on a knoll a few feet from the main highway, the obelisk, which is constructed of stone, bears a bronze tablet with the name Arthur Dudley Dobson in relief. Simplicity of design is the keynote, yet the impression it conveys is deep and lasting, proclaiming as it does, to all mankind, the heartfelt appreciation of the people of Canterbury and Westland for the pioneer who discovered, three-quarters of a century ago, the connecting link between the two provinces.

Recapitulating, it will be remembered that a whaleboat had been left on the beach some twenty miles south of the Grey. This Charles Townsend was most anxious to recover, and on October 7th, 1863, accompanied by Peter Mitchelmore and the Maori, Solomon, he proceeded down the coast for the purpose of bringing the boat to the Grey. En route he obtained the services of two other natives. On arrival they found the boat in good trim and the following day successfully launched it, and favoured with a fair wind sailed up the coast without mishap. When attempting to cross the bar, however, they were capsized in the breakers and Townsend, Mitchelmore and Solomon were drowned. The bodies of the two former were washed ashore, but that of Solomon was never found. Townsend and Mitchelmore lie side by side in the Karoro Cemetery, Greymouth. This is the first recorded fatality in attempting to work the Grey bar. Thus seven men had been drowned in seven months—all being Government servants. They were: Henry Whitcombe, Charlton Howitt and two others, Charles Townsend, Peter Mitchelmore and the Maori, Solomon. On the day following this tragedy the prospector Sherrin left for Christchurch to report the death of Townsend to the Provincial Government, J. Smith, the cook of the party, taking charge of the depôt. Five weeks later, November 14th, Sherrin again

Napoleon Hill, Ahaura, Westland. A typical mining town of the mid sixties. Note the Casino De Venise, with dancing girls in doorway.



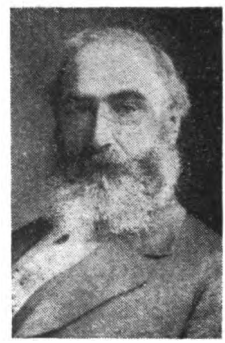
Ross, a notable field, made famous by the fact that in 2 years Cassius and Party won 22,000 ounces of gold.

returned to the Grey with instructions for Smith to carry on meantime.

The remainder of the year 1863 passed without incident. The surveys which were being made were gradually opening up the country, while the prospectors, thanks to the food supplies obtainable at the depot, were making the most of the long summer days in their unceasing search for the metal royal.

Chapter XI

William Horton Revell — Death of Tarapuhi — Revell instructed to Close Depot — Revell Addresses Public Meeting, Cathedral Square, Christchurch—S.S. Nelson arrives at the Grey.



W. H. Revell

The year 1864 was momentous in Old Westland's history—a prelude in reality to the golden drama soon to be enacted. It was fitting, therefore, that William Horton Revell, the outstanding personality of the West Coast Goldfields, should first step into the limelight. "Big" Revell, as his friends loved to call him, had been appointed to succeed Charles Townsend, as the Canterbury Provincial Government Agent at the Grey. Prior to this appointment he had been Inspector of Police at Timaru, and on resigning that position was made a Justice of the Peace.

Born in the North of Ireland in September, 1829, he arrived in Westland in the heyday of his manhood. His was a commanding presence. Over six feet in height and built on

generous lines, he was a natural leader of men. Irish to a degree he possessed an inexhaustible fund of humour, which stood him in good stead in settling many a hectic argument. His brother, John C. Revell, who had been appointed his assistant, accompanied him to the Grey.

On January 4th, 1864, they left Port Cooper for Nelson, per S.S. *Nelson*, and on their arrival there transhipped to the schooner *Mary*, reaching their destination on January 24th, after an uneventful run down the coast. John Rochfort and his survey party were passengers by the same vessel. Three days after Revell's arrival, a party of prospectors from the Taramakau reached the depot. They were in want of provisions, which were supplied, and from a member of this party, named Hughes, Revell purchased 1 oz. 16 dwt. of gold at the rate of £3 10s. per ounce. This by many writers is held to be the first sale in Westland, but is incorrect, Charles Townsend having bought small parcels from other prospectors.

On February 8th, Revell, accompanied by two survey hands, set out for Christchurch, and travelled via the Taramakau, Hohonu and Lake Brunner. The journey occupied fourteen days, the party being detained by a very heavy flood in the lake, which rose six feet, after two days' solid rain. This was reported by the Maoris to be the heaviest flood ever seen in the Grey, the water completely overflowing its banks,

two chains of which were washed out to sea. As a result of this the Government depot, which had been erected three chains from the river, was left in a precarious position, and John Revell deemed it wise to build another store at the head of what was afterwards known as Revell's Lagoon.

On March 29th, W. H. Revell returned by the alpine route, a number of prospectors from the Buller having arrived during his absence. On April 9th, Tarapuhi, Chief of the Mawhera Pa, died. He had been an exceptionally good friend to the early explorers, and had always supplied them with food and given them shelter. It was Tarapuhi, it will be remembered, who came to the assistance of James Mackay in 1860, when travelling up the Grey River. He was buried in a cave near the Mawhera Pa.

A few days later, Maoris reported to Revell that four white men, who had been prospecting at the junction of the Greenstone Creek with the Taramakau, had struck gold. There was at this time a native camp at this point which was known as the Hohonu, and the resident Maoris had thus learned of the discovery. Regarding this particular locality it has already been stated that Albert Hunt had been engaged in prospecting there for some time, with the result that he had got together about 20 ozs. of gold, despite the fact that he had the most primitive contrivances for saving the royal metal.

At Maori Point, three miles up the Greenstone Creek, above the junction of the Little Hohonu, Hunt, assisted by his Maori mate, pegged out a claim, and thus came into being the first gold mining area in Old Westland. Here, beneath from two to six feet of soil, lay three to four feet of very rich wash dirt, from which a large quantity of gold was extracted. It is noteworthy that at the time of this find Hunt was the only European in this district, which was very rough and broken and so thickly covered with underscrub as to be almost impenetrable.

Hunt and his Maori friends continued to prospect in the vicinity of his claim and discovered coarse gold over a wide area and fine gold right down to high water mark. Hunt at this time was earning £2 per day, and though food supplies were very meagre he managed to subsist for some time on fern root plus a few potatoes. With the advent of the depot at the Grey the food problem ceased to exist, for then supplies could be packed along the beach from that river to the Taramakau, and thence by canoe to within three miles of these diggings.

Hunt later received a reward of £200 from the Canterbury Provincial Government, who had originally offered £1,000 for the discovery of a payable field, but who reconsidered their decision and paid the intrepid prospector a mere £200.

Messrs. Smart and French also claimed the reward, or some recognition of their services in finding gold in many parts, but without avail.

Reviewing this payment it is most interesting to record the fact that the men who discovered other payable fields were treated in a much more liberal manner. To instance this, Hargreaves, who discovered gold in New South Wales, received a bonus of no less than £15,000 from the people of that State, and later a further £5,000 from the Victorian authorities, who also rewarded James Esmond to the extent of £1,000. In our own country Gabriel Read was paid £1,000 for his discovery at the gully which to-day bears his name. Yet Hunt received but £200 from a responsible authority for the discovery of a field which has to date yielded gold to the value of twenty-six million pounds and is still producing.

During the month of May prospecting was carried on by a slowly increasing number of men, all of whom were doing fairly well, but no real strike had yet been made. June witnessed continued activity and the arrival of further diggers. Then came a bolt from the blue, for on the 20th of this month James Hammett arrived from Christchurch with dispatches for Messrs. Dobson, Rochfort and Revell, the latter being instructed to sell off his supplies, close the depot and return to headquarters by September—in a word, to abandon Westland.

Needless to say these instructions caused consternation, and Revell, determined to place the true position before the Provincial Government, decided to make a personal tour of inspection of the Greenstone diggings. Accordingly he and Hammett set out for, and duly reached, Maori Point, where they saw Albert Hunt and his native mate obtain 4½ ozs. of coarse shotty gold in one day. Maori parties nearby were obtaining similar results, and in addition to this had unearthed a huge block of greenstone, for which this district was famous. It is of interest to note that this place was known to the Maoris as Pounamu, and, as the name suggests, was the locality in which greenstone was found most abundantly. It is paradoxical, too, that greenstone, so prized by the Maori, and gold, valued above all else by the pakeha, were both first found at the same place — at Pounamu.

Revell, now satisfied beyond all doubt of the existence of gold in incredible quantities, decided to proceed to Christchurch and to place this startling information before the Provincial Council, confident that on the receipt of this great news his instructions to sell off his stores would be cancelled.

With this object in view he and Hammett set out on June 19th, and the weather being favourable, good time was made in crossing the Alps. On arrival, Revell reported the

Greenstone discovery forthwith, displaying to astonished members of the Council one pound weight of gold which had been won in that locality. This tangible evidence of the richness of the field he had packed across the divide in his swag. Despite his report and his plea to be allowed to remain, the Provincial Government insisted on his carrying out the instructions he had received. They held that Canterbury West was worthless, and try as he would Revell could not shift them from this opinion—though he knew that that land of forest and flood was a veritable treasure-trove and that gold in unbelievable quantities was there and but waited the harvesting.

Despairing of moving the Council he managed at last to interest a few business people, under whose jurisdiction a public meeting was held in Cathedral Square. Revell addressed those present, exhibiting his gold. Christchurch would have been only 14 years old then and the Square very different from what it is to-day. And there stood William Horton Revell—a magnificent specimen of manhood, full-bearded, weather beaten, strong. In simple language he told those present all he knew—told them of a virgin country, "with wasted wealth in wild profusion strewn," told them where the gold he displayed had come from, and that there was more for the taking. He asked them to pass a resolution calling

upon the Provincial Council to reconsider his recall, that he might assist in the development of the new El Dorado. Those present, deeply impressed with his earnestness, did so, the resolution later being given effect to, and Revell was instructed to carry on.

Old timers loved to tell this story, holding that when the history of New Zealand comes to be written, this incident must be chronicled in letters of gold. Here, they contended, was a man who then knew that gold was to be found in Old Westland in fabulous quantities, and who would have been quite within his rights had he sold off his stores as instructed, and proceeded to harvest the golden grain on his own account. But no, "he saw his duty plain and straight, and went for it there and then," and in so doing reached a level of self sacrificing service seldom attained. He was known to his friends, and they were legion, as "Big" Revell, and never was a title more appropriately bestowed, for his was the guiding hand at the commencement of Old Westland's golden era. True at times he ruled, though wisely and well, with a rod of iron; true, too, that he "tuckered" many a down and out digger, giving the unfortunate one the chance required to make good. By one and all Revell was regarded as a real man. There is no greater distinction on a goldfield.

Meantime news of Hunt's discovery had reached the Buller, where it will be remembered John Rochfort had discovered gold in 1859; and here many parties were working with varying success. About this time the prospectors Smart and French also located payable ground in the Grey District, and the former wrote to Reuben Waite, storekeeper (who it has been shown had established himself at the Buller), stating, inter alia: "I consider the Grey field far before the Buller, for we get gold everywhere we try . . . . In a paddock on the bank of the Grey River a party got seven ounces for eight days' work. . . ." As a result of this communication many diggers set out for the new field, most of them proceeding direct to the Greenstone. On July 22nd, the S.S. *Nelson* arrived at the Grey, and consequently was the first steamer to enter that port. This little vessel, just out from England, had been chartered by Waite and carried seventy diggers and a maximum cargo of stores and provisions of every kind. Waite was thus the pioneer storekeeper of Old Westland and the founder of the town of Greymouth. The story of his arrival and of what followed is best given in his own words. Here they are:

"We started from Nelson in the good steamship *Nelson* in the middle of June, 1864, with a cargo of provisions and every requisite necessary for the diggers, who took no tools or provisions with them as the venture was regarded

only as a prospecting trip. From my long experience I knew exactly what was wanted on the goldfields, and the diggers were satisfied to pay my price for anything required. The Nelson Provincial Government, finding I was going to the Grey, gave me a contract to procure 40 tons of coal from the seam discovered by Brunner. On arrival at our destination we entered the river in fine style, and steamed up to the landing opposite to what is now known as Mawhera Quay. Here we landed the goods, which were, of course, left exposed on the beach, as all hands set off prospecting. Some Maoris I had brought with me set cheerfully to work, and with plenty of help I soon managed to erect a temporary store." (The exact location of this building is the corner of Mawhera Quay and Waite Street, so named by John Rochfort when he surveyed Greymouth in 1865.) "In the meantime," continues Waite, "the goods were going out as fast as I could possibly sell them, aye, before I could get them out of the vessel the diggers were jumping down the hold for them.

"At the Mawhera Pa there were only Maori women; the men were all at the diggings, and when they saw the steamer they did not know what to make of it; it was the first they had seen. As stated the Maori men had all gone to get gold, which made the white men all the more anxious to go, and before long I was left almost alone, everyone having gone to the

Taramakau River, where the natives were digging, and with the exception of my storeman and Matthew Batty, a miner who came down with me to get the coal, there were no other white men left at the Grey.

"About a week later some Maoris came from the Greenstone and brought with them a parcel of about 50 ozs. of the finest gold I have ever seen. I was glad indeed to purchase it from them. These natives then informed me that the men who had gone to the Taramakau were coming back again to kill me, and soon after this two white men returned and advised me to get out of the way, as the rest of the party were close at hand and were going to ransack my store and hang me. From what I could learn they had not been to the Greenstone at all, but only to the Taramakau, the Maoris having led them astray. In this connection the natives, having heard that a large number of pakehas had arrived by a steamer at the Grey, decided to leave their claims at the Greenstone, and commence working in the Taramakau River, at a place where they could not earn their salt, for the purpose of leading the diggers to suppose that gold had been got in that quarter. Here let me add that shortly afterwards I was informed that the Maoris had completely blocked up the track to the Greenstone, and thus it was that the new arrivals went wrong. I cannot vouch for the truth of

this; it was told to me by a half-caste and it is exceedingly probable.

"Despite what I had been told I decided to stand my ground, and the Maoris promised to help me if interfered with. Next day the whole crowd came down and camped near the store, cursing and swearing at me. There was a Dutchman who had most to say and who stole a case of gin that night. This man came into the store and said I was wanted outside. He had been round the diggers' tents trying to incite them against me, and although the case had assumed a serious aspect I could hardly refrain from laughing at the horrible attempt at the English language made by this man, especially owing to the state of excitement into which he had worked himself, imagining he was a deeply injured individual. I had neither arms nor ammunition of any kind, for up to that time they were not wanted on the West Coast.

"I went to the fire, a large one, which by the way, was fed with coal which Matthew Batty and his Maoris had brought down the river from the Brunner seam for the Nelson Provincial Government. It was rather an exciting moment, as stepping outside the store, the thought struck me that my life hung on a thread—that the weight of a feather would probably turn the scale either way. I was there standing accused, though wrongly, of having wilfully brought a number of my fellow

countrymen to an outlandish district to suffer want and ruin. I knew that nothing but self possession would avail me, so I made the most of my position and put my trust in Providence. I shall never forget the impression of that scene as it first met my gaze. The bright glare of the huge coal fire, the motley group of roughly attired figures around it, some silent and thoughtful, others fierce and clamorous, with every species of anger and revenge visible on their countenances — the solemn and monotonous roar of the breakers, together with the surrounding mountain scenery in all its pristine grandeur, formed a romantic picture rude and wild in the extreme."

Chapter XII

Reuben Waite's Story — First Shipment of Coal from Grey, July, 1864 — Isaac Blake — Hudson and Price—First Police Reach Grey.

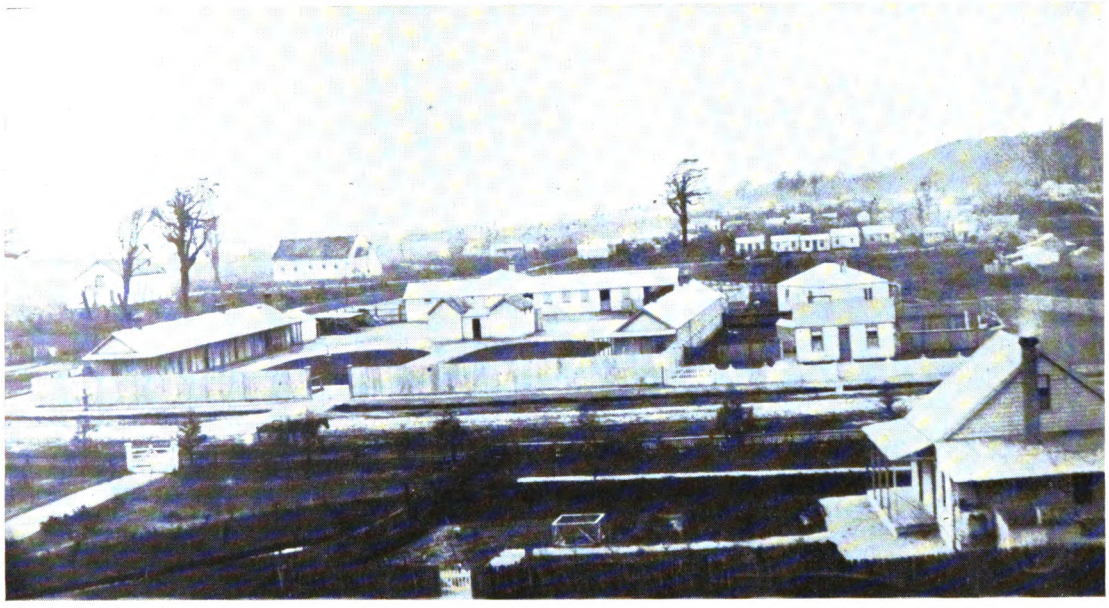
Reuben Waite

"There were a great many men around the fire waiting for me, and when I made my appearance they began asking questions. I may as well state here, that all the Maoris, men and women, were then close by, and ready to give me any assistance. There is no need to tell what they were armed with, but there would have been bloodshed that night had the diggers interfered with me, as some of them had taken the potatoes out of the pits of the natives at the Taramakau. The first question put to me by the aforesaid Dutchman was: 'Vell, vot did you corse dis rush for?' I answered that I did not cause the rush. That, when in Nelson to get a small vessel to bring me to the Grey, I called them together and told them that I was only going prospecting—that I did not lead them to believe that they

were going to a goldfield, but that according to letters I had received, I thought there was gold in the country, which I still believed, and that a proper trial would prove it. The next question was put to me by a Cockney—I am sure he was, for he murdered the letter 'h': 'Well, Mr. Waite,' he asked, ' 'ow wud yer like to come 'ere without money an 'ave to starve as we 'ave to do?' My answer to him was I had not asked him to come; he had pleased himself. The Dutchman then said: 'Vel, poys, ve vill take vot ve vants from Vait's store—an' ve vill hang him.' Just at that moment an Irishman whispered in my ear: 'Cheer up, my boy, don't be frightened, you have more friends than enemies in this crowd.' With that I felt safe, but I was still annoyed by the discontented, and most of them brought back what provisions they had, with their picks and shovels, tin dishes, etc., and I gave them full value for them.

"The men who came down with me, and were engaged in this business, were now only waiting for a steamer to take them away, but while they were so doing, two parties with more patience than the rest, had penetrated a little further up the country, and had found a track which led them to the Greenstone Creek diggings, having by chance, during their search, discovered the fresh prints of men's feet which they followed until they came to the desired spot. Here they commenced

Canterbury-West Coast Road, 1866, changing horses at the Bealey Hotel.



The Camp, Hokitika, 1865

operations and were soon on the gold. Leaving some of their number to open out their claim the rest returned to the Grey, and coming into the store one of them (Michael Spillan) asked me when I was going to get my bullocks and dray down from Nelson. I told him I was sorry to say they would be down next steamer. 'You ought to be glad,' he said; 'look here, I got this off the bottom of a paddock, 6 feet deep by 7 feet square, in one day.' He had 7 ozs. 12 dwts. of shotty gold. Another party had a parcel of 8 ozs. of the same kind of gold, both being similar to that which I had purchased from the Maoris.

"The men who were waiting for the steamer then came into the store and seeing the gold could scarcely believe their eyes, but when I showed the 50 ozs. I had bought from the natives, they wanted to know why I had not shown them that before. My answer was that they would not have believed me if I had shown it to them. Then came a rush for stores again and those who had been among the grumblers I charged an extra price as they had compelled me to take back their stores and tools.

"From that time commenced the great rush to the Golden West Coast, which up to the present time (1869) has brought out of the earth 40 tons of gold, for which I was to be hanged because those first arrivals chose to call the expedition a 'duffer rush.' After this gold

began to come down freely, and all were satisfied; in fact, I believe the Greenstone was as good as any diggings afterwards found on the Coast. I have seen many of the crowd since who were in the circle to hang me, but I have not seen the Dutchman. Perhaps he did not forget the case of gin and kept out of the road. But the worst had to come, for in consequence of the disappointment I have narrated about the rush, I had ordered no more goods to be sent down. By the second arrival of the steamer there came more diggers, but no provisions, which we soon ran short of and I had to curtail the supplies of many, especially those who had been so hard on me. These I put on half rations until the *Nelson* returned once again. When she did arrive she brought my bullocks and dray, and with two horses and a mule I had purchased from Mr. A. D. Dobson, C.E., who had just completed the survey of the Coast, I sent goods to the mouth of the Taramakau, and up that stream to its junction with the Hohonu by canoe, a distance of about nine miles, from where they were carried by the diggers to the Greenstone Creek. I then opened a branch store at the Hohonu.

"After this I returned to Nelson by the first opportunity for the purpose of obtaining goods, and also to make arrangements for transport. I was greatly astonished on arriving to find myself an object of notoriety. It appeared that a report had reached there that I had been

hanged at the Grey, during the little adventure above described. So great was the excitement of many people who were glad to see me return safe and sound, with a good parcel of gold, that I was unable to get away from them at the wharf for some time."

Waite Street, Greymouth, perpetuates for all time the name of the pioneer storekeeper of Westland, and the founder of that town, where he resided for a period of ten years, and Marion Street nearby honours Mrs. Waite. In his old age he fell on evil days, and unsuccessfully petitioned Parliament for recognition of his services in pioneering the West Coast goldfields. He died in the public hospital, Nelson, in 1885, and was buried in the Whakapuaka Cemetery.

With regard to the contract Waite had received from the Nelson Provincial Government to procure 40 tons of coal from the Brunner seam, which Von Haast had pronounced to be of excellent quality in 1860, Matthew Batty in charge of a party of Maoris proceeded to the site of the seam, and there was hewn and loaded into canoes the required quantity of coal. This was then conveyed down the river to the Grey, where on July 28th, 1864, twenty-seven tons were placed aboard the S.S. *Nelson*, and shipped from what we now know as Port Greymouth. This was the first cargo of coal from the West Coast. It is noteworthy, too, that from this date the *Nelson* ran

a regular service to and from Greymouth, steaming both ways with Brunner coal, which soon commanded a market greater than it was able to supply. It is of historical interest, too, that at this time Captain Leech, for many years afterwards harbour master at Westport, was then in command of the *Nelson*.

On the day following the arrival of Reuben Waite, that is on June 23rd, 1864, his brother-in-law, Isaac Blake, the second storekeeper to reach Westland, arrived at the Grey. He came by the schooner *Mary* which sailed in without mishap; he was accompanied by a further 40 diggers from the Buller. These men at once proceeded to the Greenstone where they soon struck it rich. Blake, on the other hand, having landed his goods on the south side of the river, at once set about erecting a store and eating house on the beach, where to-day is situated the prosperous suburb of Greymouth, known as Blaketown. It is necessary to mention here that many writers are under the impression that the original name of Greymouth was Blaketown. This is of course incorrect. The Grey River was so named, as has been shown, by Thomas Brunner in 1846, and the infant township was, in its very early days, referred to as "The Grey." John Rochfort when surveying it in 1865 gave it the name of Greymouth.

There were many "characters" on the Westland goldfields, and among them Isaac Blake

was outstanding. Here is a description of this celebrity, culled from the files of the *West Coast Times,* Westland's first newspaper: "A short, thick-set, muscular man, strong of will and resolute of purpose with a weakness for Nelson ale, and massive greenstone pendants to his watch chain, was Blake. A man who was more at home on a vessel's deck than behind a counter, and could handle a steer-oar better than a steel pen. In short, like the redoubtable old king, 'whose mark for Rex was a single X, and whose drink was ditto, double,' Blake 'scorned the fetters of four and twenty letters,' and it saved him a vast deal of trouble. Yet a shrewd character was Isaac Blake.

"The first time we visited the town which bore his name we crowded into the kitchen of his little slab store and regaled ourselves on a half-crown's worth of ships' biscuit and butter, prefaced by a thin rasher of bacon and a couple of high-coloured malodorous eggs, the whole dignified by the name of dinner, and, being somewhat pushed for room, we remarked upon the fact, and suggested that our host should get more commodious premises. 'Aye, aye,' was the response, 'if the Coast goes ahead, I'll get some congregated iron from Nelson.' No orthœpist but an able dealer, he did not believe in parting with his goods unless he received full value in return. A poet of the period, who

had possibly been refused drinks on account, thus gave vent to his spleen :—

'Old Blake is the mercantile lion,
The King of the beasts of the port,
Your putting-tricks you may try on,
But he's not the one to be caught.'

"But though an unlettered man, naturally rough, and not made any smoother by years of hard buffeting by men as rude as himself, Blake still possessed a little of the poetry of childhood. The love of the beautiful that is implanted in all youthful breasts was not altogether dead in his, and when the above lines were warbled to him by a half intoxicated customer, he shouted for all hands, and vowed that that pioneer, the writer of 'that ere song,' should never want a fifty of flour while he remained on the Coast."

Blaketown had its day, and its glory departed. "How's trade?" Blake was asked one morning, shortly after Greymouth was a township. "There aint bin a fight this week" was the answer. It was brief, and to the uninitiated ambiguous, but to those who knew it told a sad tale of ruin and decay.

By this time gold was being found everywhere along the sea beach between the Grey and the Taramakau, and diggers were steadily coming in from the Buller, Nelson and Christchurch, and even at this early date some 40 horses, a mule and a bullock dray were con-

stantly employed in the carriage of provisions and mining implements between the Grey and the Greenstone. As near as could be ascertained there were now 100 men working in the vicinity of Hunt's claim, and as a result of this, there came into existence Westland's first "shanty" (i.e., grog shop). This was opened by a man named Tracy, who drew supplies from Reuben Waite. Be it noted that in those days all storekeepers sold liquor, and further, that as a general rule only the very best was stocked.

The news of the continued discoveries of gold soon spread to Christchurch, causing some embarrassment to the Provincial Council, who were still not enthusiastic regarding the finding of the metal royal in the western portion of the province. As has been shown, the Oakes brothers had reported its existence some seven years previously, this information being suppressed, the idea of an influx of diggers being abhorrent to the powers that were. A typical illustration of the feeling then pertaining was expressed by the *Lyttelton Times,* in a leading article on July 30th, 1864, which read as follows:—"If a goldfield is, after all, to be forced on Canterbury, without the consent and contrary to the expressed desire of the settlers, they must nevertheless submit to fate, and should the natural feelings of discontent swelling up in their prudent bosoms when Fortune's golden favours are thrust into their

hands, be somewhat hard to subdue, the consolation exists that the goldfield has turned up in the remotest corner of the province." While the above article no doubt expressed the feelings of the then administrators of Canterbury, the age old lure of gold was too strong for the rank and file of the community, who lost no time in setting out for what they regarded as a land of promise, where fortunes could be won in a day, and as far as Christchurch was concerned, the long delayed rush to the Golden West became a reality.

The beginning of August, 1864, was marked by the arrival of more men, among whom were John R. Hudson and his partner, James Price, who reached Westland by way of the Taramakau Saddle on the 7th of the month mentioned. Hudson and Price were very well equipped, utilising two pack horses to convey their provisions and mining implements across the divide. All went well until they reached the Taramakau Saddle, where one of the horses lost its footing and fell, landing on a narrow ledge some fifty feet below. As it was this horse that carried their tent, blankets and food, it was essential that one of them should recover these very necessary articles. Hudson, descending the face of the cliff, and cutting the gear clear from the pack saddle, then decided it would be better to roll the horse into the ravine below than to leave it where

it was, as it would certainly die of starvation. Having done this he proceeded to the floor of the ravine for the purpose of shooting the animal, and so putting it out of its misery, but to his surprise he found it uninjured and munching at the scrub, not a bit the worse for its fall of over one hundred and fifty feet.

From this point they found great difficulty in getting the horses along, the rocks over which they were forced to travel cutting and bruising their hoofs in such an appalling manner as to render progress almost impossible. Finally they had to cut the saddle straps to make shoes in the shape of sandals which they lashed on with cord. In this manner they continued their journey, but made little headway owing to the time taken up in the constant fixing of the leather sandals which were by this time very much the worse for wear. At length they arrived in the precincts of flax bushes, which abound on the banks of the rivers and creeks of Westland. All the leather now being used, they had to substitute bags, clothing or anything that could be spared.

About this time they met a large party of men returning from the Coast — they were making their way back to Canterbury. Later they met several other parties doing likewise, one and all of whom gave Westland a fearful name, and begged them to turn back,

saying, "There was no gold — no food and nothing but starvation to look forward to." Three days later they reached the "natural paddock" at Lake Brunner. Here they rested a day to give themselves and their horses a spell. While here, another well-known pioneer, Dick Ward, arrived; he was bringing across a horse, a mule and a donkey for transport purposes. The following morning he and Hudson started for the Greenstone in an endeavour to obtain some horseshoe nails. After many difficulties they reached their destination, finding that great dissatisfaction existed among the diggers, the majority of them proclaiming the rush a duffer. Horseshoe nails were not to be had for love or money, and it was necessary to push on to Blaketown where they were obtained at an exorbitant price. Hudson remained here, erecting a flax whare, while Ward at once set out for Lake Brunner with the horseshoe nails. Making good progress he soon reached his objective, and after shoeing the horses he and Price got on the road to Blaketown. On the way down the donkey was drowned, and subsequently thrown up on the beach, the body being an object of great curiosity to the Maoris who travelled many miles to see it, having never seen such an animal before.

Hudson and Price upon completion of the flax whare decided to purchase stores from

Thomas Broham

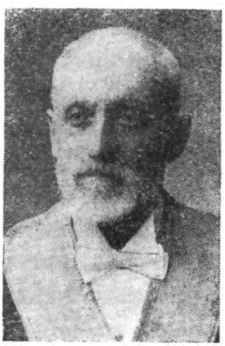
Reuben Waite and set up in business on their own account. They came to this decision because of the fact that an ever-increasing number of diggers were now arriving, for the most part from Canterbury, and that stores were few and far between. The Provincial Council, too, owing to this influx, resolved to appoint the necessary officials to take charge of the field and Sergeant Thomas Broham, of the police force, was instructed to proceed thereto without delay, Constable Cooper receiving orders to accompany him. W. H. Revell, who was at this time returning to the Grey, acted as guide for these two officers, the party travelling by the alpine route via Lake Brunner, arriving at Greenstone on August 21st, 1864. Prior to reaching the diggings they met Albert Hunt at the Taipo who had left Greenstone and was on his way to Christchurch to claim the £1,000 reward for having discovered a payable goldfield. Apart from this, Hunt had had serious trouble with other diggers, a battle royal taking place at Tracys, in which Hunt was outnumbered, having no friends nearby at the time. He, however,

adopting the principle that attack was the best defence, got busy with a long-handled shovel, with such good effect that he knocked the ring-leader out, this action so intimidating the crowd that in the confusion he got clean away.

After an inspection of the Greenstone field Revell, Broham and Cooper went on to the Grey, where the police officers established headquarters, they being the first representatives of the law to reach Old Westland.

Chapter XIII

Hudson Erects First Store at Hokitika—Rush to the Totara River—Spirit of the Diggers—G. O. Preshaw—"Banking Under Difficulties."



John Hudson

During September, 1864, the influx to Westland continued, and on the 12th of that month, Revell, reporting to the Provincial Council, stated that the diggers were earning from £2 to £5 per man per day, and that all was as it should be throughout the field; he, however, warned men from coming until a greater area of ground was proved, and more stores established, as supplies were still hard to obtain regularly.

About this time the Kapitea Creek, eleven miles south of the Grey, was rushed, and here Hudson and Price set up their first store. The gold, however, soon "petered out" and in a few days the field was almost deserted. Very bad weather then set in, during which it rained continuously for three weeks, making it impossible for anyone to leave the locality. During this enforced period of idleness

Hudson had many conversations with a celebrated prospector known as Jimmie Liddle, with whom, as soon as the weather cleared, he proceeded south, and on October 1st, 1864, they arrived at what was then known as Okatika and here they erected a store, the framework being constructed of saplings, over which calico was drawn, the size over all being 12 x 20 feet, and thus came into being the first building in the town of Hokitika, now the capital of Westland.

As has been shown, the Maori name for this river, on the northern bank of which this town now stands, was Okatika, but this being somewhat hard to pronounce, old timers, who were prone, in their own words, "to do things regardless," added the aspirate "H," substituted an "i" for an "a," and so coined the word Hokitika, which they considered more euphonious. Maori tradition hath it that the meaning of the word is "retreat," the story being that on one occasion, when the Ngai Tahu tribe were about to attack the pa which was defended by the resident (Ngatiwairangi) tribe, the Chiefs of the former were drowned when attempting to cross the river, and their followers, finding themselves without leaders, were forced to retire, the place afterwards being called Okatika, meaning retreat.

Messrs. Hudson and Price, their store being erected, proceeded to stock it—supplies being

drawn from Reuben Waite. As a matter of fact, from information they had they were quite prepared to await the result of a proposed prospecting trip to be carried out by Jimmie Liddle and his mate, Donnelly, who seemed sure that gold was to be found a few miles further south.

This expedition in due course set out, being "tuckered" (supplied with food, etc.) by Messrs. Hudson and Price. During their absence diggers continued to arrive and camped around the store, until there was quite a number of men in the vicinity all waiting for something to turn up. As a result of this influx Hudson and Price did a roaring trade, and much liquor was consumed. Thus three weeks passed. Then at long last the prospectors returned, reporting to the assembled diggers that "no gold had been discovered." "This news," states Hudson, in the course of his story, "was a great damper to all, but from a wink I received from Jimmie Liddle I knew all was well. Many of the other men would not accept the report as true, the prospectors appearing too jolly for men returning disappointed.

"In consequence of this every move they made was closely watched. A meal was then prepared for Liddle and in passing through the store to get this he managed to show me a good sized bag of gold. Shortly after this

Price returned from a fishing trip, and I at once dispatched him to the Grey to obtain all the provisions procurable. Two Maoris, who had been south with Liddle, accompanied him. It was their mission to inform all the natives in the district of the new field, and they did their job well. From Waite Price obtained all the goods he required, and after engaging the services of two packers, De Silva and Rae, he returned to Hokitika, making good time.

"In his absence I had had trouble with the diggers about the store, who had endeavoured to get hold of the prospectors, of whom they were most suspicious. The idea was to make them drunk, hoping that when in that condition they would talk; this theory however did not work out, for before they were intoxicated my liquor ran out, and just as well, for the diggers were now in a nasty mood and threatened to kill Liddle and Donnelly. As it was a free fight took place, which lasted some time, the prospectors, aided by some friends, winning this battle with ease. Peace being restored, Liddle and Donnelly came into the store and informed me that they had 'struck it rich' in the Totara, and in a branch creek known afterwards as Donnellys. The following afternoon, as the result of the news spread by the Maoris, the vanguard of the rush hove in sight. It comprised about one hundred natives—men, women and children.

"These were mostly from the Greenstone. Shortly afterwards over two hundred Europeans also arrived. With the advent of these people the prospectors at once made ready to proceed south to open the new field. As showing the rapidity with which the news of a new discovery travels," continues Hudson, "no less than five storekeepers reached my place on the day following. They were: Messrs. Sweeney, Murphy, Cochrane, Waite and Ward, who were all on their way to the Totara. Waite's bullock dray, however, was unable to cross the river with their goods and they found it necessary to send to the Grey for a boat. This had belonged to the *Gipsy*, wrecked a year previously, and it was brought overland by way of the beach.

"I thought it advisable to erect a store at the new diggings myself and engaged James Morton to look after my business at Hokitika, which he did until 1865, when I again took over. The rush, however, was not of a sensational character, and with the exception of good returns from three or four claims, not much gold was obtained, there being a wild stampede back to the Greenstone for the purpose of jumping the best of the claims that had been abandoned."

It was ever thus on the goldfields, a digger with a claim averaging £10 per week (and £10 per week was a lot of money then)

would hear of a new field thirty miles away, where Dame Rumour (always a lying jade with regard to gold) had it that so rich was the wash there that a fortune could be won in a day. To this wild unauthenticated whisper, which originated goodness only knows where, the most experienced digger would give heed, and at a moment's notice would join the mad rush to the new El Dorado, throwing away substance for shadow, almost always to his everlasting regret. Truly, the lure of gold passeth all understanding.

And yet these old timers were lovable men, loyal to one another and true to the highest traditions of our race. In proof of this assertion here is a story (one of many) told to the writer in 1905 by John Hudson himself. At that time we were both in the service of the Public Works Department on the construction of the Hokitika-Ross Railway, and this grand old pioneer would tell me of Old Westland and of the spirit of its people.

"When in November, '64, the Totara River was rushed," said Hudson, "a number of diggers, comprising Blanchard's party, set about opening up a claim; to do so it was necessary to clear the heavy bush on the surface, and in felling a large tree one of their number was struck by the butt which smashed his thigh and pinned him to the ground. The few men present had no chance of lifting the

tree to release their unfortunate mate, so some of the party set out for assistance and in response to their call over one hundred men were soon at the scene of the accident. With very great difficulty, and with the most primitive tools the tree was at length removed from the injured man. How to get him out of the forest and down to the beach was then the problem which confronted them. At length it was decided to make a box, place him therein and so convey him down the river. To do this it was necessary to split slabs out of a tree, a big job which many willing hands made short work of. The box constructed and lined with moss and fern over which oil sheets and blankets were placed, the long journey was commenced and after untold hardship and much suffering was successfully accomplished, and the beach reached.

"That night the injured man was placed in Murphy's store and two days later the party arrived at my place at Hokitika. Here a large tree was felled and four wheels for a very primitive waggon were cut from the trunk. A man named Ramsay, afterwards a saddler in Hokitika, very ingeniously fashioned harness by which the box was slung (in the same manner as an old time coach) from the frame of the waggon. This made travelling much easier for the patient who by this time was pretty far through, but as game as they

are made. Travelling by the beach route with the greatest difficulty and danger, the Taramakau and other rivers were successfully crossed and two days later the Grey was reached. Fortunately the steamer *Nelson* was there and the sufferer was placed on board and taken to Nelson where he entered the hospital and made a slow but steady recovery.

"Not satisfied with all they had done the diggers passed the hat round, collecting a large sum of money. With part of this they paid their mate's fare, handing him the balance to pay his way, and so be under compliment to none. Were the old timers not real men?"

As previously stated John Hudson resumed charge of his store at Hokitika early in 1865. Here he carried on until the following year, when he purchased the Albion Hotel, a thriving hostelry in that then wonder city. Two years later he sold out and became proprietor of the Cleveland which he conducted for thirty years, until 1897, when he retired from the licensing trade, and joined the Government service as a road and bridge inspector.

"Honest John" Hudson, pioneer prospector, storekeeper, licensee and Government servant, was a man of many parts, who died in 1919, aged 78 years, and rests in the burial ground of Hokitika, the town he founded seventy-five years ago.

As will be seen from the increased number of men who rushed the Totara River and Donnelly's Creek diggings, Westland was now attracting more attention, and in consequence more men. Quite a pretentious centre of activity had sprung up at Blaketown, where as early as November, '64, there were ten stores, many shanties and eating houses, as well as commodious livery stables which hired out horses at exorbitant rates. These were in great demand, particularly when it was whispered that "the best field ever" had been discovered some thirty miles away. Everyone would want to get there in a hurry and competition would be very keen, for now an air of confidence prevailed and it was considered certain that a big strike would be made at any moment.

With the stage thus set for the dawning of Westland's golden era it was meet that on October 26th, 1864, G. O. Preshaw, pioneer goldbuyer of the province, should arrive at the Grey by the S.S.*Nelson*. He was attached to the staff of the Bank of New South Wales, and had had considerable experience on the Australian goldfields prior to coming to New Zealand. A keen observer and a humorist in the full sense of the word, his contribution, long since out of print, to literature pertaining to the golden days of Westland, entitled, "Banking Under Difficulties or Life on the Goldfields," is a most valuable one, and is, in fact, the only

authentic record existent of the days immediately prior to the great rush. This being so, the next few pages are devoted entirely to his description of Westland from the date of his arrival to the coming of the Christmas Party to Hokitika on December 20th, 1864.

As showing what manner of man this banker was, it is illuminating to note that he opens his preface by stating that "The old days when the title page of a book was almost as good, or at any rate as explanatory, as a preface have departed. Now you may learn nothing from the name. Who has not heard of that agricultural society who sent for 'Edgeworth's Essay on Bulls,' only to find that the 'bulls' were Irish, and principally verbal." He then proceeds as follows: "The extraordinary vicissitudes of travel—the rough way of living and the hardships that the pioneers encountered in the early days of the Westland diggings, have never—at least to my mind—been fully set forth. In those days, as a rule, people were hand, not head workers. Now the past is to them but a dream. The writer of the following pages kept a diary, and the scenes described are therefore presented as they appeared to him at the time."

Coming now to Preshaw's story, the following extracts are taken from this rare and interesting book:

"October 21st, 1864, gold having been discovered in payable quantities on the West

Coast of the South Island, I was ordered to take a run by the steamer *Nelson* (from Nelson), leaving on the above date, to have a look at the place and report upon it. On the day following our departure we duly arrived at the Buller (Westport) and a miserable looking place it was, there being only two buildings, both stores or shanties, kept respectively by Messrs. Martin and Hodges. We found a good many Maoris camped about and were amused at seeing a Maori woman washing her baby, a little thing a few months old, which she took down to the river, and dipped several times, the child taking it kindly, and although the water was very cold it cried but little; she then slung it on her back without even drying it and trotted away. A number of Maoris were busy writing letters to send by us to their friends at the Grey River. I saw one or two of these, which were most creditable productions both as regards spelling and writing.

"On October 25th we sailed for the Grey, which is sixty miles south of the Buller. We ran down in eight hours. The tide not being favourable when we arrived we anchored in the roadstead until it suited. When Captain Leech thought there was sufficient water on the bar, he went to the masthead and piloted his vessel in. The Grey bar is a shifting one; at one time the run in will be a straight one; at another a long way to the north or south,

in which case the vessel has to run broadside on to the breakers between the sandspit and the beach. Constable O'Donnell was a fellow passenger on this trip, and he joined Sergeant Broham and Constable Cooper, who were camped at the Grey.

"The few residents turned out to meet us, among whom was Reuben Waite, the earliest settler on the Coast. There was only his store at the landing place, but about a mile to the south there were two others kept by Messrs. Blake and Horsington. The diggings were at the Greenstone, some twenty or thirty miles to the south. I hired a horse and got a packer named De Silva, a foreigner, a talkative, consequential little fellow, to accompany me thither. The day was anything but an inviting one, the rain coming down in torrents. The first ten miles of our journey lay along the beach, the sea being very rough, the breakers rolling in with great force. My guide did not seem to mind but rode right through them. Six miles from the Grey we came to a river, the Paroa, generally known as the Saltwater Creek. This we crossed and four miles further on reached the Taramakau; here there were two stores.

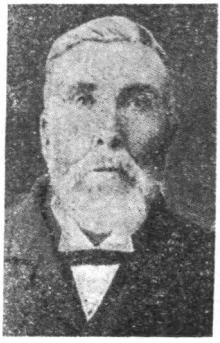
"Our journey now lay inland from the mouth of the river which had to be crossed four times. The Maoris camped about advised us to stay where we were, saying that a 'fresh' would be down and that it then would be impossible to

cross. De Silva, however, knew better and I trusted entirely to his judgment in the matter, and off we went; we got over the first ford all right, but found on reaching the second that we could not get across, the river having risen very rapidly. De Silva then came to the conclusion that the best thing we could do was to hurry back, which we did, and just managed to re-cross the first ford, the river having risen over a foot in half an hour. And a good thing we did, for sure enough a heavy fresh did come down which prevented traffic for some days. Had we succeeded in getting over the second ford the chances are that we should have had to remain in the river-bed, between the second and third crossing, until the fresh went down.

"We had no alternative, so rode back to the Grey. There being no prospect of my getting to the Greenstone for a week at least, and having collected all the information I could about the place, I thought it advisable to return to Nelson, which I did. My report, on the whole, being a favourable one, it was determined to send me back by return steamer with a view of opening up in business on the West Coast."

Chapter XIV

Preshaw's Story — Greenstone — Tracy's Shanty — Captain Leech Inspects Hokitika River —Rush to Six Mile (Waimea).



Captain Leech

"On November 5th, I made another start in the *Nelson,* at 6.30 a.m. Later in the day it came on to blow so hard that we had to put back, and anchored under Tonga Island. We made another start on the afternoon of the 6th, and that evening we met the *Wallaby,* a new steamer from Sydney, built to the order of N. Edwards and Company. This boat came down in the nick of time for the West Coast rush. She coined money for her owners; in fact paid for herself in a few trips.

"On the following morning a heavy sea found its way into the cabin, and on going on deck I saw we were putting into Wanganui Inlet, it being too rough for us to proceed. We sheltered there until noon, when the wind having lulled, and the sea gone down, we set out for and reached the Grey at 10.30 p.m.

"The Bank of New Zealand were quite alive to the importance of sending a man down to occupy the field, as they saw we were making preparations for so doing, and one of their staff, a young fellow named Walmsley, was a fellow passenger on this occasion.

"On our arrival we found the residents of the Grey in a state of great excitement, a new goldfield having been discovered at the Totara River, about forty miles southwards. It is necessary to mention here that the Grey River divides the provinces of Canterbury and Nelson. The diggings are on the Canterbury side.

"On November 10th, I made a start for the Totara on foot. My swag containing a pair of blankets, gold scales, etc., I put on Sweeney's waggon, a light American affair, the only one of its kind on the Coast. It was heavy walking along the beach. At the Taramakau I met Walmsley and Revell, the Government Agent; they were on their way to the rush. Lunched at an eating house, which had been erected since my last visit, kept by Mrs. King (one of the first white women on the Coast). We slept in a Maori whare (building) and all being very tired we were soon in the arms of 'Morpheus.'

"The rain poured down on the following day and we could not stir out, so put in the time playing euchre and whist. Up betimes next morning and crossed the river soon after break-

fast, but found we could not get along the beach owing to it being high tide. We came across an old whare in which I lay down, but not to sleep—that was impossible—sandflies (a little black fly which bites hard and raises a lump like a mosquito) being here in thousands. Walmsley and Revell went on, driving a pack-horse before them, on which they had a tent, provisions, etc. When the tide was about half out I started in company with two or three others; we soon met seven or eight Maoris on horseback returning from the Totara. They said there were five hundred men on the ground, and that they were returning to the Greenstone; my own impression was to take up some of the claims left by the pakeha, and this eventually turned out to be the case. We jogged along until we came to the Arahura, where we camped. We were informed that to catch the low tide we must turn out early. This we certainly did, arising at 0.30 a.m. We found when on the tramp that Morey, the driver of the waggon, had mistaken the time, thinking it was 4.30 a.m. It turned out just as well he did so as, by starting at that hour, we had a splendid beach to travel over. We arrived at the Okatika River at five o'clock (November 13th). Here we found a calico store and another building close to it, built of brush-wood, flax, etc., the only two buildings on the north side of the river. The store was kept by Messrs. Hudson and Price. The other building

was occupied by Ramsay and party. As the river was very wide, deep, and in parts swift, a ferry boat was formed from a large tree scooped out, all in one piece, and half-a-crown a head was charged for crossing. On the south side we found several tents and four stores. While we were resting here the rain came down in torrents, and as many diggers came up from the Totara River en route to the Grey we decided to accompany them. That night Morey, a man named Murrell and I camped at the Arahura. The small tarpaulin I always carried we rigged above us, with boughs at the back and sides. We then made a large fire, boiled the billy and had tea. The rain then came down in torrents and put out the fire. Our blankets were soon wet through. Murrell and I were seated on a box containing my gold scales. There we sat shivering, without 'a drap of the cratur,' and in this plight did we remain till 1 a.m., by which time the rain ceased. Murrell was between Morey and myself, and had decidedly the best of it, for he would snooze away, first leaning his head on my shoulder, and then on Morey's. At dawn a fresh fire was lighted, the billy boiled and some coffee made. Bush rats were about us in hundreds; the ground all around us being some inches deep in water. This was without exception the most miserable night I ever spent, and to make matters worse we, when ready to proceed on our way, discovered a whare within

fifty yards of our camping place which would have afforded us first-class shelter from the elements.

"We reached the Taramakau the following evening. Here I met Sergeant Broham for the first time. He was in McGregor's tent writing his usual weekly report. He was squatted on the ground, and writing on his knees, the rain drops coming through the roof and on to his paper; writing under difficulties and no mistake. On reaching the Saltwater next day we found it flooded and had to camp for the night, so one of our party went back to the Taramakau for some flour and some 'wai pero' (strong water, i.e. gin). The next day we reached the Grey.

"The following morning when on the beach I noticed a Maori picking up something and putting it into a kit (basket). I was inquisitive enough to ask him what he was about, and found he was collecting eggs, the eggs of a small bird called tara, or sea swallow. I picked up a few which we fried for tea; they were excellent. I may here state that I was called by the Maoris 'Fish Oh,' which was the nearest approach they could make to Preshaw. By the diggers I was known as the 'Banker with the Cabbage-tree Hat.'

"A few days after this, on my return from one of my trips to the Greenstone, I was fortunate enough to come across about three dozen of these birds' eggs. These I put in my

'cabbage-tree' hat, and rode along till I came to a tent. Hailing the owner thereof I said, 'What have you for dinner?' 'Bacon, damper and tea,' was the reply. 'All right,' I said, 'you provide the bacon and I'll provide the eggs.' 'Eggs, be d——d!' was the reply. 'Well, here they are, old man. Give me the frying pan and I'll fry them,' which I did and in less than five minutes we were both sitting down to a sumptuous repast."

Anent the hardships suffered at this period by the pioneer prospectors, Preshaw says: "The greatest scourges on the opening of the Coast were sandflies and mosquitoes. They were quite unbearable. The only remedy the diggers could adopt to rid themselves of these pests was to rub the face and hands with bacon, which was by no means pleasant. With the increased facilities for communication with one point and another, it would appear strange to narrate in detail the numerous difficulties and hardships the pioneers of Westland had to contend against. When boats or bridges were things unknown, scarcely a day passed without hearing, 'Poor so-and-so is drowned' in some creek or river. The wonder is that the number drowned was not greater. Many stout, hardy fellows were missed; lost in the bush and perished by starvation, drowned, or killed by accident—for at that time there were no bush-rangers on the Coast, gold not being plentiful enough to induce these demons of society to

locate themselves in such a wilderness. A typical case of drowning occurred to-day (November 22nd, 1864), when a young man named Shillingford perished in the Taramakau. He had arrived by the last trip of the *Nelson*, and was on his way to the Greenstone, travelling alone. He had mistaken the ford and got into deep water and was carried down about one hundred yards into an eddy, which sucked him under. The sad news cast quite a gloom over the town. He was well known in Otago, where he had made money, and had come to the Coast with the intention of starting in business. Since my arrival there has been on an average one death per week through drowning, at this ford. On the day following an inquest was held on the body of Shillingford by Mr. John Rochfort."

On November 24th, Preshaw states: "I went to the Greenstone in company with Horsington and De Silva, and put up at a shanty kept by a man named Tracy. Our lodging," he continues, "was on the cold ground. We had some old sacking under us, and my blankets, which I had brought up with me, over us. I, as usual, managed to get the middle berth. The day following, though Sunday, was business day, and I visited the few storekeepers in the town. Not being satisfied with this I found out one or two parties who had large parcels of gold, went to their tents, purchased it from them and issued some deposit

receipts. Having no office and no safe, I had to carry a pair of saddle bags with me (to hold the gold) wherever I went, which was anything but agreeable.

"On November 28th, Harry Abbott, (another pioneer packer) arrived from the Grey, and there being nothing more for me to do I packed up and went with him to the Hohunu, a creek five miles from the Greenstone, which empties itself into the Taramakau. Here I got a canoe which took me to that river, and got out at a place called the Devil's Elbow. This was a sharp turn in the river, where great skill had to be shown in handling the canoe, for a capsize in that spot meant sudden death, for under the high bluff was deep water, with numerous whirlpools. I did not care to risk it, so got out with my swag. From the bank it appeared as if nothing could save the canoe from being dashed to pieces against the bluff. She shot down the rapids at the rate of ten miles an hour, when, by the skilful handling of the man at the stern, she turned in a twinkling. I got in again and in a few minutes was safely landed at the mouth of the Taramakau.

"Learning at this township that the *Nelson* was in, and being most anxious to send my gold by her, I looked around for a pack-horse but could not get one; they had all left about an hour before. I was determined not to be beaten, so after getting something to eat and drink

made a start 'on shank's pony' for the Grey, a distance of ten miles along the beach. I had a heavy coat on, a revolver by my side—and last, but not least—a bag containing 350 ozs. of gold dust; high tide and the wind and rain right in my face. Fortunately for me a store-keeper named Everest was going down and was kind enough to carry my swag occasionally. Had he not been with me I must have broken down long before I reached my goal; as it was, two or three times I had to lie down on the shingle to rest, till feeling cold, I would jump up and make a fresh start. Owing to the tide being high and the night dark we both had tumbles over logs, stumps, etc. Everest had one nasty fall and cut his lip severely. We called at Meyer's store (Saltwater) where we had a pannikin of tea each, which freshened us up. I reached Horsington's store (Blake-town) at eleven o'clock as 'done up' as ever I was in my life. I roused up Jones (Horsington's right-hand man) who pulled off my clothes and rubbed me down with a rough towel. I then had some bread and cheese and a bottle of ale, and then went to bed. I got up at nine o'clock next morning as fresh as a lark, sent my gold by the steamer, and went out hunting for eggs in the afternoon—but had no luck."

It is of historical importance to note that this shipment of gold from the Grey, by the S.S. *Nelson,* on November 29th, 1864, was the first from Westland.

Banking on the diggings was no sinecure, and the fact that Preshaw carried 350 ozs. of gold dust (almost a stone and a half avoirdupois weight), over ten miles of beach, not in daylight, but at night, when the tide was high and the going extremely bad, is proof of this. It must also be remembered that a river and sundry creeks had to be forded, and at high tide, too, which made them even more dangerous than usual. That this man knew of the hazards of the journey is certain; he had written and warned others of them. Yet this knowledge did not deter him from giving his principals the service he deemed it his duty to render. When the banking history of New Zealand is written the indomitable Preshaw will surely occupy an honourable place therein.

Interrupting Preshaw's narrative momentarily, once more in an endeavour to preserve the chronological sequence of this work, it is necessary to state here that December, 1864, was one of the most momentous months in Old Westland's history. From its commencement men simply poured into its rapidly opening goldfields, and in consequence of this other financial institutions became interested, and Peter McTavish of the Union Bank of Australia arrived at the Grey for the purpose of opening a branch. The Totara diggings, too, greatly improved, and on December 1st, Revell visited them on a tour of inspection; he was

accompanied by the gold-buyer, Walmsley. On making enquiries it was apparent that all the miners were doing well. Three permanent stores had been erected by Messrs. Murphy, Sweeney, and "Daddy Maxwell," a well-known character throughout the Coast. On this occasion Walmsley purchased 300 ozs. of gold, the field generally giving every indication of producing the metal royal in great quantities as soon as it was properly opened up.

Continuing Preshaw's story, he states: "On December 3rd, not being able to get a horse, I started for the Greenstone again on foot, travelling being most disagreeable, the Hohuna having to be crossed no less than twenty-two times, in many places the water being over my knees. As usual I took up my quarters at Tracy's shanty. On the following day, business being slack and there being much drinking going on and many rowdies about, I left early and returned to the Grey."

On December 6th, he writes as follows: "The *Nelson* arrived. She brought over seventy passengers, Messrs. Cassius and Comiskey among the number, and what pleased me most, a horse for me, which did not arrive before it was wanted. On the day following, Captain Leech, of the *Nelson*, started overland to have a look at the Okatika River.

"On the eighth the first rush to the 'Six Mile' (Waimea) occurred, and the next day

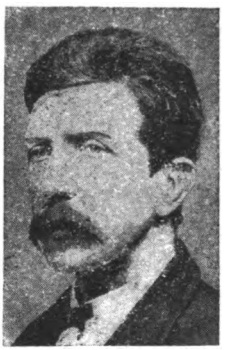
Walmsley and I started in company for the Greenstone. I had my little horse (Nobby), a new saddle and bridle, and was in fact quite smart-looking. When we got to the second ford of the Taramakau, we found the river too high to cross with safety, so made up our minds to visit the Six Mile, which is all the attraction just now. Walmsley said he knew the fords, so off we started. The first place he went into was so deep that he had to swim for it. I followed. Nobby being new to the business did not like it; when getting into deep water he reared up, and, I believe, would have fallen on me had I not slipped off and struck out for the bank; fortunately there was no current, so I got out all right. The folk in the township had been watching to see how we would get on. As soon as they saw me in the water they sent a canoe to the rescue, but before it was half way over the river I was out—Nobby close at my heels. We had a row with the ferryman, who saw us coming, yet allowed us to take the wrong ford. I was in a pretty plight, wet through, and had a couple of thousand pounds in bank notes in the breast of my shirt. These, of course, were wet, and my revolver also. I sent the ferryman to McGregor's (store) for some dry clothes, and in the meantime took off my wet ones, which I hung round a fire to dry. I could not stand this long. The sandflies soon found me out, so I had to put on my wet clothes till the dry ones came. The notes I put round

the fire and they soon dried; the revolver I took to pieces, dried, and oiled; purchased some brandy from a shanty nearby, and went over to McGregor's, where I stayed for the night.

"A few days later I again made a trip to the Greenstone. Walmsley and I went up at the latter end of each week, usually on Saturday, remaining over Sunday, which, as I have before stated, was the business day. On this occasion I was at the Taramakau when Walmsley called en route for Greenstone. I got ready to accompany him, for I made it a rule to travel, if possible, in company; the Taramakau being such a treacherous river it was unsafe for one to travel alone. At this time I had my safe (a little thing which two men could carry), in McGregor's store, under his bed, which was immediately behind the bar; the tent was a calico one. I had my safe here for two reasons; in the first place Taramakau was in a central position as regards the then existing diggings, viz., Greenstone, Totara and the Six Mile, and again the police tent occupied by Sergeant Broham and Constable Cooper was erected here, Constable O'Donnell being at the Grey.

Chapter XV

S.S. Nelson Arrives at Hokitika — The Christmas Party — Rush for Business Sites — Gold Everywhere—End of 1864.



Michael Cassius

"As soon as Walmsley rode up and said he was going to the Greenstone, I saddled Nobby, took my saddle-bags into the bedroom, unlocked the safe, took out what notes and coins I wanted, strapped up the saddle-bags, put them on the pony, and away. It so happened that I was particularly busy on this trip, both on Saturday and Sunday. As usual I took up quarters at Tracy's. On Monday we rode to Hohuna and found such a fresh in the river that we could not proceed on our journey. That night we stayed at Everest's. About an hour after I went to bed, I put my hand in my breeches' pocket (for let it be known I always slept with my breeches on and ofttimes in my boots), and missed the key of my safe. I felt first in one pocket, then in another. I lay for some time trying to remember when I had it

last. For the life of me I could not. I remembered going to the safe and locking it up but nothing more. I got up, struck a light, searched the saddle-bags, but no key could I find. Next morning I gave a man £1 to go to the Greenstone to see if I had dropped it at Tracy's. He returned in the evening without it. I was in a nice fix; my safe at Taramakau, myself a prisoner at the Hohuna, where I was likely to be for days, and my key lost. In this state of suspense I remained until Wednesday evening, when, by good luck, a Maori, in a canoe, called in on his way to Taramakau. The river was anything but safe. However, I was in such a state of mind that I would not lose the chance of getting down, so left Nobby to be sent after me. Off we went. I did not relish the trip, but I sat down in the bottom of the canoe and remained perfectly steady, and trusted entirely to my Maori friend. I did not even ask to get out at the 'Devil's Elbow' and in less than half an hour I was safely landed at the Taramakau township. I paid the Maori his fare—£1— and marched up to the store. Here I saw McGregor, and after a while said, 'By the way, did I leave a key here?' 'Yes,' he replied, 'Dan found it on the table immediately after you left on Friday; he did not know whose it was and hung it up inside' (pointing to the bedroom). I went in, and sure enough, there was the missing key. I opened the safe, which, as I said before, was a small one, in which I had left

several hundred ounces of gold, and £2,000 in notes. The treasure I had packed away at the back and the few books I had in use, piled up in front. On opening it everything appeared to be as I had left it, so I locked up, determining to balance up after tea. This I attempted to do, but a lot of drunken men coming in I had to give up.

"That evening I went to Broham's tent, where I slept; of course I told him about losing the key and finding it again. Some time in the night I woke up with severe pains in my stomach; I was regularly doubled up, groaning and perspiring with pain. Broham knocked up Cooper and sent him to McGregor's for some brandy and gave me nearly half a pannikin full, which I drank. This had a good effect and I slept until morning. I got up and tried to get to the store, being anxious to balance my cash, but, finding myself too weak, returned to the tent, where I remained the whole day. Next morning, feeling better, I went to the store, wrote up the books, counted the cash, and balanced. I was truly delighted, and went home to Broham in great glee.

"A day or two after this the *Nelson* arrived at the Grey. I took what gold I had there and weighed it at Horsington's. I could not do this at the Taramakau, my scales only weighing a few ounces at a time; my large set I kept at the Greenstone. Horsington assisted me to weigh off some hundreds of ounces, but when I totted

up the total, I found I was some 35 ozs. short. I said to him, 'This can never be, we must weigh it over again.' We did so, but with the same result. I did not know what to do. However, before sending it away, I determined to ride back to the Taramakau and have a look in the safe, thinking I might have left a lot in it—but no such luck. It then struck me the gold must have been taken out of the safe. I told Broham the whole circumstances of the case, and, moreover, whom I suspected. He went to the store and searched but without discovering anything. The gold was gone without a doubt.

"I had no alternative but to report the loss to my inspector in Christchurch, which I did by the first opportunity. My anxiety was now to know how the report of my loss would be received, and I must say I fully expected to be called upon to make it good. I did not hear from the inspector for some considerable time. (In those days letters had to go via Nelson.) Meanwhile I was continually being asked by one or another had I heard from the inspector. At last a letter arrived to the effect that although leaving the key of the safe behind was careless, still, taking everything into consideration, the difficulties I had to contend with, etc., it was decided that the loss should not fall on me. On taking the letter to Jimmie Price, he said it would not have affected me in any case. I replied, 'Only this much, that I would have been some £140 out of pocket.' 'Nothing of

the kind,' he said, 'had you been called upon to make good the amount, it would have been paid by the principal business people here (Hokitika) and the Grey unknown to you.' I was thunder-struck, and at the same time gratified, to think I had such kind friends who would have assisted me out of my difficulty.

"To account for my cash balancing at Taramakau, as I said before, I had no gold scales there large enough to weigh off, so took the weight for granted, putting the value down at so much, say 500 ozs. at £4—£2,000, which balanced my cash, but on weighing off found I had only 465 ozs., which at £4 would be £1,860, or £140 short. A letter was written and signed by nearly all the business people on the Coast, and forwarded to my inspector, calling his attention to the hardships I had to undergo, the liability to loss through having no office, etc. When at the Greenstone I always slept with my clothes on, even to my boots and hat. I had my own blankets, which were kept (or supposed to be) in a bushel bag to prevent their being 'fly blown,' but which had not the desired effect, for when I had occasion to use them I found them 'crawling.' I was, of course, disgusted, but what was I to do? I had to grin and bear it. My bedstead, too, was anything but a comfortable one; four posts stuck in the ground, three saplings on the top, the middle one a shade higher than the other two. The first time Broham had

occasion to sleep at the Greenstone he went to Tracy's shanty. Tracy said, 'You can have Mr. Preshaw's bed, you will find it very comfortable.' Broham and I have had many a laugh since about my bed at the Greenstone. Another great hardship we had to undergo was the total absence of fresh meat. Wild pigeons and other birds were very plentiful, and were shot by the dozen, and boiled by the bucketful, adding fern tops called pick-a-pick, which, when boiled, made a splendid vegetable and substitute for cabbage, and to which the population were indebted for the absence of scurvy owing to their constrained daily diet of salt meat.

"Apart from my own affair, the one and only theft committed up to the time of the great rush, was by a Maori named Jacob who was in the employ of John Hudson. He entered a digger's tent at the rear of Hudson's store, at Hokitika, and stole a small quantity of gold. He was, however, caught with the gold upon him, at once tried by a jury, and was sentenced to be tied up to a stump all night and hanged next morning. He was, as was thought, securely fastened to the stump, but lo! next morning Jacob was nowhere to be seen; how he freed himself never transpired. After a lapse of six weeks Jacob returned looking penitent, and seeking employment."

As the country to the north and south of Hokitika continued to attract an ever increasing

number of men, many of whom quickly got "on the gold," Messrs. N. Edwards and Company decided to despatch the steamer *Nelson* thereto. Of this most important and historical event, which marks the beginning of what was to be the wonder city of the southern hemisphere, Preshaw, who, together with Broham, was actually present, states: "On December 20th, 1864, Captain Leech of the S.S. *Nelson* visited Hokitika and satisfied himself that he could take his steamer into the river. The owners (N. Edwards and Company) had chartered her on this her first trip to Messrs. Ferguson and Buchanan. Up to this time these gentlemen had been engaged as packers, but they now intended to start business as storekeepers. The river was full of snags, many of which could not be seen at high water, and were therefore dangerous for vessels entering without a pilot. A boatman named James Teer acted on this occasion. The sea was as smooth as glass; so smooth that he crossed the bar alone in his boat and piloted the vessel in in safety. She was full of cargo and crowded with passengers. Broham and I were on the south spit, and assisted to make her fast. The passengers were taken to the north side of the river—where the town of Hokitika afterwards stood—by boat. The place at that time was one mass of driftwood, so thick that it was impossible to get a horse or waggon through without clearing it away. The cargo was discharged inside the river on the beach,

and on a point close to the sea. A storm coming on a few days later and in consequence a fresh in the river, a lot of goods were carried out to sea before they could be removed. Some of the storekeepers sustained severe loss. Waite was one of the number and J. R. Fraser another. Ferguson and Buchanan had erected a store on the south beach, but afraid of it being washed away, removed it over to the north side. On the passengers being landed there was quite a rush for allotments. Amongst the first marked out were those for Cassius and Comiskey, the Bank of New Zealand and Ferguson and Buchanan. I did not mark out one but got the mail bag and rode off to the Grey. I reached there at ten o'clock at night, and rather astonished Mrs. Waite by putting in an appearance at that hour with the mail.

"When I returned the next day I scarcely knew the place, it had so changed in appearance, even in that short time; buildings were going up in all directions. The inspector of the Bank of New Zealand decided to put up a building, which he did as soon as timber was procurable. I agitated for an office, and was informed one would be provided if the rush turned out a good one. As soon as the Bank of New Zealand was finished, two or three other hands were sent down, and an agency opened. I was then working at a great disadvantage, inasmuch as Walmsley was still my opponent in the field, and his bank having an office in

Hokitika had by far the best chance of securing the business accounts, and of this they did not fail to take advantage. Notwithstanding such odds against me, I managed to hold my own, especially in the gold purchases.

"Revell was busy throughout the day marking off sites of 40 feet frontage; he also laid out two streets and measured off the different allotments, reserving one chain frontage to the river, and 40 feet wide for the street. Several disputes have already arisen. The sea still being smooth, Captain Whitwell, master of the S.S. *Wallaby*, crossed the bar in the ship's boat and took soundings. He afterwards brought the *Wallaby* into the lagoon and discharged cargo. To top off the day Cassius opened his store. On December 21st, Broham pitched his tent on the Camp Reserve which had been marked out by Revell and here I was generally to be found at meal times. The next day the cutter *Nugget*, of Invercargill, and the cutter *Petrel* arrived from Jackson's Bay, with thirty-nine men who had been prospecting in that locality with indifferent success, Barrington and party being amongst the number."

At this time gold was being discovered almost everywhere and on the 23rd—two days before Christmas—a rush set in to Saltwater Creek, which, as has been stated, is five miles south of where Greymouth to-day stands. Here over one hundred men settled down to work with good results—this field being very rich.

Despite this and the fact that the Greenstone was still producing fabulous quantities of the metal royal, the idea that the wealth of Westland, for the most part, lay to the south became general, with the result that there was a definite drift of the population in that direction. So pronounced was this, indeed, that for a time the Grey District was almost deserted, and storekeepers who had established themselves there quickly made for the rapidly rising town of Hokitika.

"Christmas Day of this year (1864) fell on a Sunday," Preshaw tells us, "and I was busy all day buying gold. A short time after I got to bed (my saddle-bags under my head and my revolver at my side)," he continues, "three drunken men rushed in; one came close to me, took my hat from over my eyes, and said to the others, 'By gad it's the b—— banker; suppose we give him a crack on the head with a stick?' and off they went into the bar. I have often heard it said that when people are drowning the principal events of their lives pass through their brain. So it was with me in this instance. I thought of all sorts of things and at the same time made up my mind what to do. I turned my face to the door and took out my revolver which I always kept in good order, and waited. I knew perfectly well should any scrimmage take place, and the report of a pistol be heard, there were so many maniacs about, that without enquiring why or wherefore, but 'eager

for the fray,' they would rush in and I would stand a very poor show. Still I had to protect myself and the bank property as far as I could, and this I was determined to do. They had several drinks in the bar, and away they went. I did not see any more of them. My idea was, had they shown up again, to challenge the first man at the doorway; had he attempted to advance—fire. I knew I could depend on my revolver and unless the mob tore down the tent I was good for six of them. All I can say is that I was in a very awkward predicament, and was not at all sorry they did not turn up again. I have often thought since what risks Walmsley and I ran, both of our lives and the bank property. Fortunately for us Burgess and party were not on the Coast. Had they been we would have stood but a poor show."

The last entry in Preshaw's diary for the year 1864 is as follows: "December 28th. A dispute arose this morning between Messrs. Cassius and Price about one of the business sites. Revell was called on, and decided in favour of Cassius. Price persisted in putting in his pegs and digging post-holes. Revell interfering, Price made a blow at him with a shovel, striking him across the instep of the left foot. I was present when the assault took place. The allotment in dispute was marked out by Cassius, and adjoined the one occupied by Messrs. Hudson and Price, the first storekeepers at Hokitika. It seemed hard that these men should

not be allowed an extra allotment or two, having been the pioneers of the place; still not having applied for an increased area, Cassius was fairly entitled to it, having marked out the ground. A little later Price apologised to Revell, and was let off with a severe lecture."

Reviewing Preshaw's first Christmas in Old Westland it was not a very happy one. The fact that stern necessity compelled him to contemplate (and on Christmas night, too), the possibility of having to defend his life—and his bank's property—and in so doing kill, or be killed, was far from being in accord with the principle of peace on earth and towards mankind good will. Truly this Yuletide was very hectic and the amount of liquor consumed was enormous.

John Hudson often spoke of the "Christmas Party," as the diggers and storekeepers who arrived at Hokitika by the *Nelson* and *Wallaby* were called, and of the seasonable celebrations they indulged in—mostly at the expense of some prior arrival, who now was "on the gold." He mentioned, too, the fact that at this time two Maoris who had been digging at the Hohonu, hearing of the rush to the Hokitika River immediately jumped into a canoe, and coming down the Taramakau River actually crossed the bar and paddled sixteen miles south to the Hokitika River, which they in turn entered and proceeded to the rush. "They were gold-crazed," said Hudson, "and

knew not what they did. Fancy 'working' two treacherous bars in one day. Man alive, the odds were a million to one against working one, let alone two!" He spoke, too, of Big Revell and how he made Price his partner "feel worse than a wet week," when upon receiving his apology he admonished him for striking him with a shovel — and so on, and so on. Some day the story of "Honest John" Hudson (and of other pioneers, too) will (and should) be written and then, and only then will posterity realise the debt of gratitude they owe these sterling men.

Concluding this section of Old Westland it is necessary to state that by the end of 1864 about 2,500 ounces of gold had been shipped to Nelson. Of this 1,200 ounces had been obtained by four men, who, working quietly at Watson's Creek, two miles south of the Grey, had won this amount in less than four months. At a later date they cleaned up a further 600 ounces, and then returned to Ireland from whence they came. On these sons of Erin fickle fortune had smiled. As far as could be ascertained the population on the Westland (or Canterbury) goldfields was 830 at the end of 1864.

Chapter XVI

Superintendent Province of Nelson Drowned—"Charley the Packer"—Canterbury West Proclaimed a Goldfield—George Samuel Sale—The West Coast Road—Australian Invasion.

George Samuel Sale

"The year 1865 opened with bright prospects for the West Coast," states W. J. M. Larnach, C.M.G., Minister for Mines in the Stout Government, who compiled a very comprehensive series of articles pertaining to the mineral resources of the Dominion which appeared in the Handbook of New Zealand Mines, 1887. "The population was increasing rapidly," he continues, "and men belonging to various nationalities were arriving daily. Others came over from Canterbury, some of whom had taken only seven days to walk from Lyttelton. Two women were reported to have walked the whole distance, and a man with a wooden leg had also braved the dangers of the road.

"Michael Cassius," he goes on to say, "was appointed Postmaster at Hokitika (January

15th); this was another proof of its growing importance, while the Police shifted their camp, originally at Greymouth, but which had been transferred to the Taramakau, to Hokitika, then fast becoming the business centre of the goldfields."

Interrupting Larnach's narrative momentarily it is necessary to record that on January 28th, His Honour the Superintendent of the Province of Nelson, John Perry Robinson, arrived at Greymouth by the steamer *Wallaby,* on a tour of inspection. On the return trip to Nelson, when off the Buller, a boat was launched for the purpose of conveying the Superintendent to the township of Westport, which, when crossing the bar, capsized, His Honour and three others being drowned.

A few days after this distressing occurrence a sensational incident took place at the Waimea, whereby Walmsley, the Bank of New Zealand gold buyer, was robbed of gold to the value of £920 and £800 in notes. He had placed the gold and notes in a valise, which during his absence mysteriously disappeared. Fortunately Sergeant Broham was in the township when this happened and at once got to work, with the result that the following morning he recovered the valise minus the gold and £130 in notes. He arrested a man on suspicion, but could prove nothing against him and he was discharged. Years later a large quantity of gold was found near where the robbery took

place, in a decayed stump, it being generally considered that the thief had hidden it there.

Proceeding again with Larnach's story, he notes that "The population at the Grey had now been considerably reduced, many diggers having moved to the Waimea. Men were also leaving good claims at the Totara, Saltwater and Greenstone, in order to proceed there, as many parties were obtaining rich finds and the field was said to be a second Gabriel's Gully."

Of this rush Preshaw, in "Banking Under Difficulties," states: "At this time roads were so bad that packers found great difficulty in getting from the beach to the Waimea, a distance of five miles, but reckoned twelve." Several diggers, whom I presume to have been unfortunate, took to packing, and amongst others was Charles L. Money, known as "Charley the Packer," and from whose book, "Knocking About in New Zealand," I have extracted the following: "At this time the road from the beach up to the township, a distance of twelve miles, passing, as it did, the whole way through bush and thick undergrowth, and crossing and recrossing the creek every hundred yards, was in a condition perfectly inconceivable to those who have not been to the great rush on the West Coast diggings. Roots of all sizes, torn and mangled into a sort of macaroni squash, and when large remaining a hindrance to

both horse and man, caused the mud ploughed by cattle and pack horses to assume the appearance of a torrent; so bad was it that the whole distance was marked by the bones of dead animals.

"The price given for the package of stores was £3 per hundred pounds for the whole distance, and I suddenly bethought me of the possibility of making myself into a very profitable pack horse." How he most successfully did so is another story, and a very interesting story, too, but sufficient has been written to show the transport difficulties of Old Westland in those days.

By this time gold was being found almost everywhere and each and every day there was a rush in one direction or the other. As a matter of fact wherever new ground was tried it invariably proved payable, and it is utterly impossible to put on record every rush that took place; only the most important can be dealt with, and pride of place must be given at this time to the general exodus which took place from all parts of the goldfields to Jones' Creek, which we to-day know as Ross. This town through the years has been the centre of various diggings, which were for the most part very rich. Of this particular field Larnach states: "In 1865 ground was worked in the neighbourhood of the Totara, and in the same year the rush to Donoghue's took place, fol-

lowed by that to Jones' Creek (the present town of Ross). The prospects at Donoghue's Creek were very rich and it is said that the claim of the prospector (Michael Donoghue) yielded as much as £60 a man a week." Official records show that over five tons of gold was won at Jones' Creek, and that the Ross Flat yielded to Cassius and party 22,000 ounces in two years.

Meanwhile Revell had again crossed the Alps to Christchurch, for the purpose of reporting to the Provincial Council that in his opinion a stupendous rush to Old Westland was imminent. As the result of this report, the Council in their wisdom, on March 5th (1865), proclaimed what we now know as Westland, from the Grey River to the Southern boundary of the Canterbury Province, a goldfield, with William Horton Revell as Warden.

Following on this proclamation and in anticipation of maintaining law and order, the Provincial Council dispatched Police Commissioner Shearman and a party of mounted constables to Hokitika, Sergeant Broham being appointed Inspector of the Westland District.

On March 19th Messrs. Rolleston (Provincial Secretary), Seed (Collector of Customs), and Warden Revell arrived by the S.S. *Nelson,* the former at once proceeding to arrange all matters of administration. Two days later, March 21st, Revell opened his office (if a tent

can be thus dignified) in Revell Street, and issued Westland's first miner's right to his brother John. Hokitika, which was already developing into what might be described as "a man-sized town," was declared a port of entry early in April, and the 15th of the same month was marked by the arrival of Commissioner George Samuel Sale, better known as "King" Sale, who immediately took complete charge of the goldfield on behalf of the Canterbury Provincial Government.

In April, too, the Collector of Customs at Hokitika (Mr. W. Seed), at the request of the General Government, submitted a report on the West Coast gold and coal fields, the following extracts being taken therefrom: "Gold in payable quantities has now been found on all rivers from the Buller to the Totara. Fair prospects have also been found down the Coast south to Mount Cook, so that as far as can be ascertained the northern half of the West Coast of the South Island appears to be auriferous. . . . . I spoke to a number of men on the Waimea who expressed it as their opinion that the goldfields would last for many years. At the end of March I estimate there must have been 7,000 people on the Coast. Of these about 3,000 were at the Waimea, 2,000 prospecting and digging in other places, and 2,000 congregated in the township at Port Hokitika. The quantity of gold purchased in

a fortnight at Hokitika was about 5,000 ounces." Mr. Seed also visited the Brunner mine, the first, by the way, to be opened up in New Zealand, which was being worked by Matthew Batty and party, and notes that a tunnel had been driven for a distance of 110 feet on the north side of the Grey River, and further that 40 tons per week were being sent down the river to Greymouth.

The report also made it plain that the writer was strongly in favour of Canterbury West being proclaimed a separate Province, pointing out that its inhabitants had come mostly from Nelson, the North Island and Otago, and that they had nothing in common with Canterbury. This statement is noteworthy, as it was the first shot fired in the agitation which followed for the severance of Westland from Canterbury.

About this time the Canterbury Provincial Government, alert to the necessity of constructing a road to the goldfields, had surveys made of all practical routes, and after mature consideration decided to construct a highway over Porter's Pass, on to the Cass, and then along the Waimakariri to its junction with the Bealey: over Arthur's Pass to the Otira, down the Taramakau to the Wainihinihi, through the bush to Arahura, and then along the beach to Hokitika, the total distance from Christchurch being 156 miles. Construction

was pushed on with the greatest expedition, and in 15 months the road was open for coach traffic, though thousands of diggers passed over it long before it was completed.

The powers that were in Christchurch, now fully convinced of the possibilities of Westland as a gold (and consequently a revenue) producing district, did their utmost to facilitate its development; and to adequately protect the vast amount of the precious metal being won, set up a gold escort on similar lines to those then in vogue on the Victorian fields. A bullet-proof wagon was built, first-class horses purchased, and a number of mounted constables enrolled, the idea being to defeat any attempt that might be made by bushrangers to steal the treasure when en route to Christchurch. Under Inspector James the escort duly reached Hokitika, only to find that all the gold was exported by sea, a wag entrusting them with a single pennyweight to guard during their return to Christchurch.

The next outstanding incident in the story of Old Westland was the coming of what was known as the "Australian Invasion." Anent this rush "Waratah," in "Tales of the Golden West," says: "Our neighbours in Victoria tried to check it, and said it was only a steamboat rush, which would turn out disastrous to the thousands of Victorian miners who were leaving a certainty on their own goldfields for an

uncertainty in New Zealand, but all to no purpose. Great seagoing steamships, 'leviathans of the deep' in those days, with a fleet of smaller steamers able to jump over the bars or perish in the attempt, with all sorts and conditions of sailing vessels, chartered or owned by West Coast merchants, were busily engaged in the conveyance of goods and passengers to the new El Dorado, and Hokitika was honoured as the central port where one and all were dumped on the shore from the big steamships tendered by local tugs, and drafted north and south and inland, as their friends or fancies led them. It was no uncommon thing at the first of the rush for the bar tenderers, such as the *Bruce* and the *Yarra,* to land 500 or 600 passengers a day at a pound or so a head. It was indeed a busy time for shipping companies." As showing the magnitude of this particular rush the correspondent of the *Nelson Examiner* wrote on April 6th: "The Hokitika River has a most mercantile appearance. There are no less than 22 vessels inside the bar, while three or four are in the offing."

To provide accommodation for this influx, canvas stores and hotels were going up in every direction, cut timber being almost unprocurable. This acute shortage, however, was relieved somewhat when Messrs. Nees and McBeth erected a sawmill which marked the beginning of the timber industry in Westland.

So important a centre had Hokitika now become that it was meet that on May 3rd, 1865, there should appear Old Westland's first newspaper, the *West Coast Times*. "But before this time Hokitika was a considerable town," states R. C. Reid in "Rambles on the Golden Coast." "Along a sandbank on the north side of the river, running parallel with the sea, a long straggling street had sprung up as if by magic. . . . . This was called Revell Street. On each side of it were temporary erections, some of timber, some of canvas. Nearly every other one of these canvas or wooden tenements was dignified with the name of hotel. The usual features of a big rush were visible. Drinking, fighting, gambling, all the means resorted to by those who got their money easily in the first flush of a new goldfield, were conspicuous by their presence. Many hotel keepers at this time must have literally coined money. . . . . Many stories have been told of the extravagance of diggers on the early goldfields of Victoria. We have heard of 'Champagne Charlies' by the score, and have seen some of them. But we question if there were many better opportunities in goldfields' history of making a small 'pile' quickly than was afforded in the 'shilling nobbler' days of Hokitika. General pool, at a pound each, with 5/- a life, was a nightly occurrence amongst dozens of lovers of the

green cloth. Payment of three shillings for the use of a blanket on the floor, with half a dozen fellows gambling at your head or feet the whole night through, and disturbing your slumbers by going 'five pounds better' every five minutes, was by no means an uncommon incident. A large theatre was built and it was opened every night to packed houses at high prices. . . . . There was a large police force stationed at the camp where there was gathered a mass of humanity.

"Here resided 'King' Sale, Warden Revell and other Canterbury Provincial Government officials, as well as prisoners waiting trial. There was no jail then, only a lock-up, and prisoners committed had to be escorted over the range to Christchurch for trial. The place indeed outgrew itself. The authorities could not grapple with the wonderful flow of population.

"Let me here recall one of the pictures to be met with on the beach in those days. A stranger visiting Hokitika for the first time, and not previously apprised of the unenviable notoriety which the port had gained for itself, would be struck with astonishment at the multitude of wrecks and remains of wrecks with which the beach was covered. From the entrance of the river to where the *Montezuma* had been cast high and dry, the picture was one that could not be equalled in the colony, and perhaps not in the world. In one spot the last

remains of the *Oak* might be observed; further on, a confused mass of ruin, a heap of splintered planks and ribs marked the place where the *Sir Francis Drake* and the *Rosella* had finally succumbed to the force of the waves. Yonder could be seen the masts of the *Titania,* and nearer home all that was left of the *New Zealand* supplied us with a painful reminder of the dangers of Hokitika."

Yet nothing daunted by these dangers the great Australian Invasion continued, and as most of the new arrivals were experienced diggers, they soon swarmed all over the Coast, and new ground, for the most part exceedingly rich, was opened up daily. This greatly increased the returns, it being calculated that the yield of gold for the first five months of this year was over 52,000 ounces.

Chapter XVII

Diggers Splendid Men — Westland's First-born —Town of Greymouth Surveyed—First Church Service—Westland a Separate Province.

J. A. Bonar

Of this phase Mr. Leo Northcroft, one time editor of the *West Coast Times,* and father of Colonel the Honourable Mr. Justice Northcroft, D.S.O., V.D., writer of the introduction to this work, tells us: "Field after field was opened with amazing rapidity. From Martin's Bay in the south to West Wanganui in the north could be seen the tents and fires of the gold diggers. Captains of vessels sailing along the coast would notice a continual line of fires, each of which indicated parties of miners. Prospectors pushed up the rivers and streams, poured over terraces and hills, almost invariably meeting with a rich reward.

"Hokitika was the scene of the first great rush; and for a time numbers predominated there, Kanieri, Eight Mile, Big Paddock, Blue Spur, Waimea and numberless flats and gullies

supporting a bustling, tireless population of many thousands. All along the beaches to Greymouth and up the Grey River, and thence to the Taramakau the busy hives of workers could be seen."

Taken as a whole these diggers were splendid men, most of them in the morning of their manhood. The hardships and privations to be endured (and they were many) were simply regarded as part of their job, which was to obtain an adequate share of the "wasted wealth in wild profusion strewn" throughout the length and breadth of Old Westland.

True, many of them when doing well threw their money about, and, as noted by Reid, the hotels, and likewise the dance halls, as well as the shanties in the smaller centres, did a roaring trade. Certainly successful diggers vied with each other in their methods of entertaining, for when one made it a champagne supper (with pint bottles at £2 a time) another would, in the vernacular of to-day, "throw a real party," with double the amount of champagne plus sandwiches, the filling of each being intermingled with a finely-shredded £5 note. The writer vouches for this statement, having been personally acquainted with the digger responsible for this particular party, who lived to a ripe old age, the filling in question in no way impairing the digestive organs.

There were other ways, too, of disposing of £5 notes, one of the most popular methods being to use them to light their pipes with, in place of the usual paper spills so much in evidence in those days. Such wanton waste has been a feature of all goldfields. Men the world over, when faced up to fabulous quantities of the metal royal, become gold crazed and invariably love to parade their wealth before all mankind. As an extreme example of this form of madness it is on record that a goldfields storekeeper in Victoria actually had his horse shod with golden shoes, the weight of each of the four being over seven ounces.

The diggers as a class also spent a deal of money on personal adornment. Expensive rings, tie pins and watch chains of gold and greenstone were regarded as an outward and visible sign of prosperity. Their style of dress, too, was most picturesque, the vogue being to wear a Crimean shirt and white moleskin trousers, which were held in position by a crimson silk sash, the bottoms of the trousers being pushed into knee-high boots. A black sombrero, very high-crowned and very wide in the brim, with a crimson silk cord round the band was the correct headwear, the whole get-up being most elaborate. With a population that was almost entirely male, it is hard to understand why these rugged men were so fastidious as to their attire. Yet they were so,

and in this respect Solomon in all his glory did not have much in his favour.

At this time great excitement was caused by the discoveries made at the Five Mile (Kanieri). These diggings were rich indeed and soon 1,000 men were on the field. A month later the population was 5,000 and many stores and hotels were erected, the town at one period being almost as large as Hokitika.

Commenting on the phenomenal rise of the population at Kanieri, and elsewhere throughout the goldfields, due to the influx from Australia, the *West Coast Times* remarked that in May there was a novel increase at Hokitika, Mrs. J. McCarthy and a Mrs. Smith having given birth to children. "Hokitika McCarthy wouldn't sound badly," stated Westland's first newspaper; "the first child born at the Dunstan was called 'Clutha'." In assuming that the McCarthy offspring was Westland's first born, the *Times* was incorrect, Dr. Ryley, who was in a position to know, stating that Mrs. Smith's child was born on Friday, May 21st, while Mrs. McCarthy's did not make its appearance until Monday, May 24th.

Then came news that gold had been found in the Grey River and a rush set in to the Twelve Mile, which quickly extended to Red Jack's, No Town and Nelson Creek. These diggings being situated in the Nelson Province, Mr. John Blackett was appointed Warden. No

Town proved to be one of the richest fields of all and presently 10,000 men were located throughout the district. These diggings were very hard to reach, the only means of access being by roughly defined tracks through the bush, which proved particularly bad going for pack horses, dogs being utilised to carry loads up to 30 pounds in weight.

As a result of these discoveries John Rochfort was instructed in July to lay off the town of Greymouth. While the survey was being carried out there was a great rush for sections close to Reuben Waite's store, which was on the Maori Reserve. The whole of the river frontages were quickly taken up, many on Mawhera Quay bringing as high as £12 per foot. Substantial buildings, including stores and two-storey hotels, were quickly erected, despite the fact that timber cost £2 10s. per hundred square feet. Provisions also became very dear, flour selling at £150 per ton. The population was estimated at this time to be 3,000, and W. H. Revell was transferred from Hokitika to open a Warden's Court. Larnach notes that "it was currently reported and believed at this time that many of the claims at Maori Gully and Red Jack's were yielding a pound weight of gold per man a day."

On this becoming known still more men poured into Greymouth, which was now the established centre of the new field. With this

increase in the population the food shortage became even more acute, so acute indeed that it was found necessary to dispatch four vessels from Hokitika with supplies, which eased the position somewhat.

While these wonderful returns were being obtained in the Grey district the southern fields were also yielding up the precious metal in amazing quantities. Hokitika was also going ahead by leaps and bounds, with an ever-increasing population. A hospital had been built, the post office completed, and a contract had been let for piling 12 chains of the wharf. The export duty on gold shipped from there for July was £3,000, and the import duties nearly £4,000.

It is of importance to note that on the 30th of this month the Reverend J. Buller of the Wesleyan Church conducted the first religious service held in Westland in the Corinthian Hall, Hokitika.

In the same year the first Roman Catholic missionaries reached Hokitika, arrangements soon being made for the building of St. Mary's, which was opened for divine service on Christmas Eve, 1865. This was the first church to be completed in Westland. The Wesleyan Church was the next, being built facing Tancred Street and opened for service early in 1866. The Anglican Church followed the visit of Bishop Harper in 1865, who made the necessary arrangements for the building of

All Saints', which was opened for divine service by Archdeacon Harper on October 21st, 1866. The Presbyterian Church, which was built in Stafford Street, was opened on the first Sunday in February, 1867.

The winter of 1865 was very severe, continuous rain bringing about many floods which caused a complete cessation of work. In consequence of this many diggers abandoned the goldfields while able to do so, for a little later exceptionally heavy seas caused the bars at Hokitika and Greymouth to silt completely up, and as the roads were impassable Westland was entirely cut off from the outside world.

In September, the weather having somewhat improved, activities were renewed and the Auckland Lead, midway between Hokitika and Greymouth, was opened up. Here some of the claims yielded as much as £100 per week to each man, and from one of the richest 64 ounces was obtained in one day.

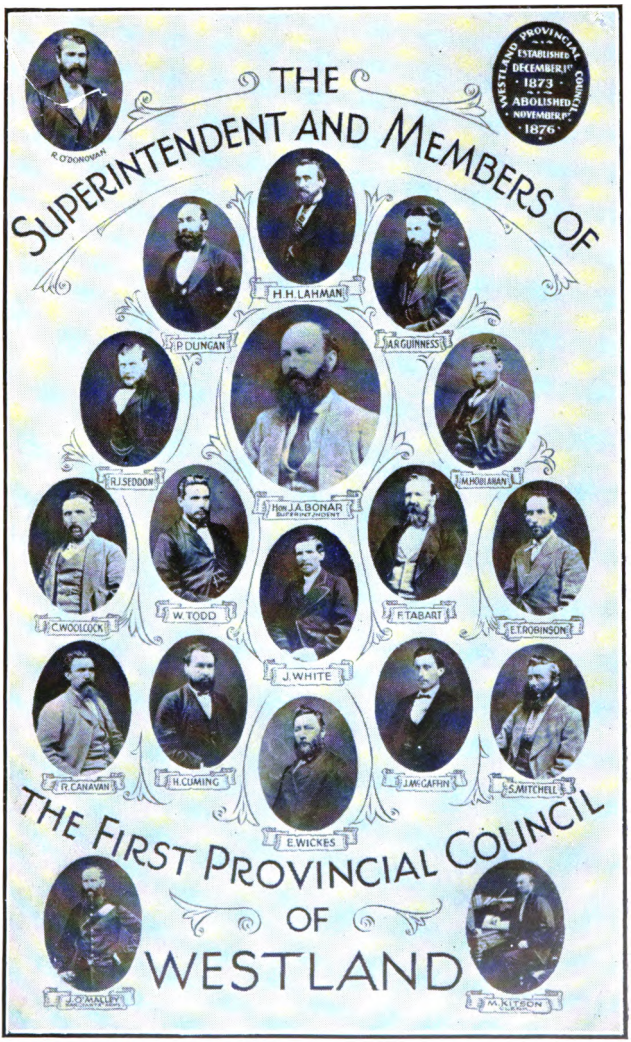
On the 3rd of this month the gold buyer Walmsley was stuck up between No Town and the Twelve Mile and robbed of gold and notes to the value of £4,000. In recording this incident Preshaw, under whose direction Walmsley was operating, states, *inter alia:* "Walmsley was stuck up by five armed men masked, and robbed of 824 ounces of gold, and £1,000 in notes, total value £4,000. He left No Town early in the day accompanied by a

packer named O'Brien, the gold being divided, the latter having 800 ounces. When half way he was suddenly surrounded by the robbers and pulled off his horse before he could attempt to draw his revolver. O'Brien, who was some yards ahead, galloped to the Twelve Mile and thus saved his 800 ounces. Reporting the matter to the Nelson Police stationed there, they set out after the robbers but failed to capture them. A few days afterwards four men were arrested, but nothing could be proved against them. This is the only case of robbery under arms which occurred on the West Coast goldfields, the result of which was that banks doing business at No Town decided to close their offices there and let the diggers bring their gold to Greymouth," which was rapidly growing in importance and had now a newspaper, the *Grey River Argus,* which made its first appearance on November 17th, 1865. Towards the end of the year Okarito became the Mecca of the diggers of the West Coast and soon a terrific rush set in to what was known as the Five Mile Beach.

Larnach thus describes this episode: "Hundreds of diggers were taken from Hokitika by the steamer *Bruce,* which did the journey in twelve hours, and was generally crowded with excited passengers, who willingly paid £5 for that short distance. R. C. Reid, who went to the field as a gold buyer for the

Union Bank, accosted a party of four, who were paddocking wash dirt, and asked if they had any gold to sell. One of the party enquired, 'How much money have you, mate?' To which Reid replied, 'As much as you require.' On reaching the tent he was presented with a couple of 'billies,' both nearly brimful of the finest gold dust, the result of six weeks' work. When weighed it was found that Reid was a couple of hundred pounds short, although he carried £2,000 in notes with him."

Just prior to Christmas the West Cost goldfields were proclaimed a separate judicial district, Mr. Justice Gresson holding the first sitting of the Supreme Court in Hokitika in the following January. About this time many men flocked to Lake Brunner where Albert Hunt stated he had unearthed rich ground; favourable reports, too, had come from the Buller and the Lyell, and thousands of men were hastening there. The year closed in a most sensational manner, for on the beach just south of Greymouth claims yielded gold in greater quantities than had previously been found. So rich was the wash here that £3 was paid for a pannikin full of it for exhibition purposes. Similar leads were discovered at the Taramakau, Arahura and Three Mile (Hokitika). During this year the export of gold from the West Coast fields was 302,034 ounces, valued at £1,174,000.



Westland's first and only Provincial Council.

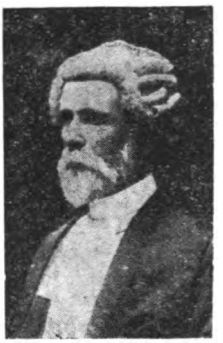
Digger on the tramp.

Before proceeding to enumerate the outstanding events of 1866, Old Westland's record year, it is necessary to briefly note that Commissioner Sale, and the Canterbury Provincial Council officials under his jurisdiction had by this time succeeded in setting the civic administration machinery in motion and that law and order prevailed throughout the goldfields. "King" Sale's task had been a tremendous one, but having unlimited authority, which he used to the utmost, he soon by the just and equitable manner in which he carried out his duties gained the confidence of the people as a whole.

While it is completely outside the scope of this work to cover the political history of Old Westland, which is an intriguing book-length story in itself, still it is essential to briefly note that the beginning of 1866 saw the birth of a movement designed to bring about the separation of Westland from Canterbury, and the establishment of the former as a separate province. In this connection it is not the intention of the writer to set out the pros and cons of the arguments used in the agitation which followed; recriminations would serve no useful purpose, it being sufficient to say that the Canterbury Provincial Council (no doubt impressed by the endeavours of the separationists) raised Westland's representation on that body from two members (who were elected on October 25th, 1865) to five members, in July, 1866.

Yet even this gesture did not appease Westland's stalwarts, who still clamoured loud and long for the right of self determination.

As a result of this agitation the General Government, in 1868, enacted legislation by which the government of Westland was taken out of the hands of the Canterbury Provincial Council, and placed under the jurisdiction of the General Government and a body to be elected and known as the Westland County Council. This was the beginning of the end, and five years later, on December 1st, 1873, the Province of Westland came into being.



Sir Arthur Guinness

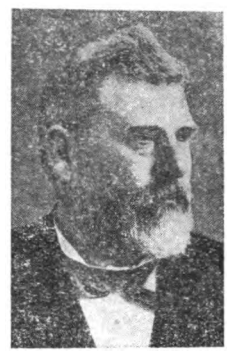
The election of the new Provincial Council, which took place on January 9th, 1874, resulted as follows:—Superintendent, J. A. Bonar; members, for Hokitika J. White, F. Tabart, W. Todd; for Greymouth H. H. Lahman, C. Woodcock, E. Wickes; for Arahura R. J. Seddon, M. Houlahan; for Kanieri E. T. Robinson, S. Mitchell; for Paroa A. R. Guinness, P. Dungan; for Ross H. Cuming, J. McGaffin; for Okarito R. Canavan. This, the first and only Provincial Council of Westland, had but a short life, for on November 1st, 1876, the

Abolition Act came into force, and the Provinces of New Zealand ceased to exist as self-governing bodies, and thus did Westland attain the status enjoyed to-day.

Messrs. Bonar and Lahman in due course became life members of the Upper House, both of whom were Legislative Councillors for some years. A. R. Guinness became M.H.R. for Grey in 1884 and sat continuously until the time of his death in 1913; he was elected Chairman of Committees in the House of Representatives in 1893, and to the position of Speaker in 1903, which office he held until his death. In recognition of long and faithful service he was knighted.

Chapter XVIII

Richard John Seddon — Storekeeper - Politician - Premier — Albert Hunt, Will-of-the-Wisp of Goldfields—George Dobson Murdered—Close of Record Year: Gold to Value of over £2,000,000 won.



Richard John Seddon

RICHARD JOHN SEDDON, another member of the Council, became world famous, and the story of his connection with Old Westland has been contributed by Mr. D. J. Evans, Hokitika, a life-long friend of the Seddon family, and son of Mr. James Evans, a pioneer, and leader of the Welsh community on the West Coast goldfields; whose name, in recognition of his many valuable exploring expeditions, is perpetuated in Mount Evans (8,613 ft.), the Evans Range, and the Evans Glacier. Of New Zealand's greatest statesman, who represented Westland for over a quarter of a century, Mr. Evans writes as follows:

"The name of Seddon is written indelibly in the history of Westland, as it is in the annals

of New Zealand, and the records of the Empire. Truly an outstanding leader, and one who had the power to sway a people and to bend them to his progressive ideas. From a tireless advocate of ideals and aspirations to one with the power to implement his thoughts and remedies for the ills of the masses, he passed into the highest sphere of his unique record —a humanist. It was on a plea and platform of humanitarian proposals that he passed into Parliament once again in his final appeal to the people, sweeping the polls and holding an impregnable political position, unequalled in the country's records. It was on that pinnacle of his fame and power, that his life-work ended, and a great worker in the cause of humanity and his race, closed a memorable career, so often still recalled and reflected on for its breadth of vision and soundness of purpose for the common good.

"His birthplace was Eccleston, Lancashire, in June of 1845. He ventured across the seas to the Victorian gold rush, and ultimately found employment in the railway workshops in suburban Melbourne. But only for a brief sojourn, when news of the West Coast gold-field discovery lured him by direct steamer to Hokitika. Then began a most interesting career, as slowly Mr. Seddon began to make his way in the public life of the community. He arrived in 1866, and it is worthy of record

that among his earliest friends were John R. Hudson and Walter Ramsay, two of the first arrivals at Hokitika. The diggings called, and Mr. Seddon followed the early days of the Stafford and Waimea fields. It was near the latter (now called Goldsborough) that he set up a storekeeping business at the Big Dam. It was the centre of a minor rush, and flourished for a few years, but has now vanished —for only the memory of the locality remains. Three years after the first arrival of Mr. Seddon, he returned to Melbourne, and brought back the lady of his choice, to whom he had been engaged. Mrs. Seddon came with her husband in 1869, and played a notable part in the life of the statesman to be. The young couple became established at Big Dam, where a country business was conducted. Life on the goldfields in those days called for resource in the individual—more so for the man in business, who with a nomadic population had to watch carefully the movements of customers who ran accounts. Mr. Seddon was able to play his part, and had many a battle with doubtful debtors, but in only one case was he worsted in actual contest. In later years when visiting England as Premier of New Zealand, one of the reception party at the railway station was his vanquisher in open combat, yet hearty was the reunion between the two former contestants. On another occasion, Mr. Seddon had

to rescue from the dam a miner returning to his camp loaded with his week's supplies, who missed his step, and with his burden was in danger of drowning. But instead of thanks abuse was uttered when the swagsman found his stores all pulp. The difficulties of transport in those days to the back country were many, corduroyed tracks alone serving. Where horses could not go, men shouldered the burden, and Mr. Seddon is credited with many a heavy load up the hill to ease the weight on the trusty horse. Such was the atmosphere, at least in part, of those early goldfields days in which Mr. and Mrs. Seddon played a very full part, as pioneers of a new land, where the fortunes of their family were laid.

"It was not very long before Mr. Seddon took an interest in local public affairs. Miners invariably took a keen interest in the course of events, and the needs of the new country as the localities were settled, became of paramount importance. More so, because at that stage the district was under far-off Canterbury, where the authorities regarded the West rather as a liability, and at one stage wished to withdraw from it. So there was work to do to organise the district, and in his immediate locality Mr. Seddon became prominent. He was first elected to the Arahura Road Board, which embraced the new goldfield, and was an active member, becoming Chairman. Then

in 1874 he was one of the fifteen members elected to the Westland Provincial Council, his colleague for Arahura district being Michael Houlahan, while A. R. Guinness, afterwards Speaker of the House of Representatives, was one of the members for Paroa. Later, when the Kumara gold rush occurred in 1876, Mr. Seddon and family moved to the new centre which offered wider opportunities, and in the same year, when the Provincial Council was abolished, Mr. Seddon was elected a member of the now-existing Westland County Council with which he was associated till 1891, when he resigned on becoming Minister of Public Works in the Ballance Government. In 1878 he was elected Mayor of Kumara, and went into Parliament the following year. Mr. Seddon was a member of several local bodies, embracing school committees, the Westland Education Board, and others. His intimate connection with local affairs was severed in 1891 when he removed to Wellington to fill the larger sphere awaiting him in the public life of the nation. Premier Ballance passed away in 1893, and on the 1st May of that year, Mr. Seddon entered into the office of Premier, which he held until his death in June, 1906.

"His political career was an intensely busy one. Mr. Seddon devoted his full time and all his talents to the duties ahead of him. His

colleagues were no less remarkable in their application to responsibilities, and New Zealand saw a rapid change over from the Conservative policy to the Liberal policy. The latter was marked by much reform in social life and industrial activities. The land administration was liberalised generously, and many changes enacted, including the initiation of a labour policy with the principle of arbitration established. His imperial policy was indicated by his response to the Empire position when the South African war ensued, and in other ways he showed the greatest affection to the Homeland with which he sought to create the strongest ties. His national work—in fact Empire service, too—is recorded in the public acts and history of the colony, as New Zealand was in his time, and need not be dilated on here, suffice to say that his passing drew forth a remarkable tribute from the people who revered his life-work and ultimate sacrifice (for he died at the early age of 61) as one of the greatest service to those who enjoyed the fruits of his good work, and which was the foundation for further enlargement as time went on.

"The West Coast remains indebted to him for his vigorous service on local bodies for a period of years, during which he was most active in striving for the opening up of the country. As a Member of Parliament, and

ultimately Minister and Premier, he did a great deal. He strove hard for the railway connection between Greymouth and Hokitika, which was delayed by the Conservative party. Another stroke of policy was the seizure of the Midland railway in 1895, resulting in the outlet to Canterbury being assured, and later, in 1905, deciding on the Otira Tunnel work. Further, he commenced the railway to Ross, intending it to pass on into South Westland, and commenced the opening of a vehicle road south; the first major bridge, over the Waitaha River, he was able to open on his last visit to Westland. But already he had arranged for the bridging of the Wataroa River, feeling sure the bridging of the Big Wanganui River intervening could not then be delayed. And so an arterial highway was assured for the southern district.

"In other respects, he promoted prospecting subsidies to assist in opening new fields; he fought for the reduction of the miner's right fee, and the abolition of the gold duty. He had a ready sympathy always for the back-block miner or settler, and where he could, gave all assistance possible. As a pioneer he knew the value of opening up the country and affording facilities for its resources to be used to the best advantage, and his work in that respect must have been of the highest value. He foresaw the plight of the aged miner left

in the evening of his days to the care of charity, and to create a defence against want in old age, and some measure of comfort for declining days, the pension was his special duty and care in acquiring for those who became eligible. Many of his old West Coast comrades of the early times, some of whom had drifted to other parts of New Zealand in search of a living, had occasion to keep in grateful memory that one great act of forethought for those who had not prospered in their active lifetime.

"In his busy years of later life, Mr. Seddon continued to represent Westland, where reposed the fullest confidence in the Member. Year by year along with Mrs. Seddon he made an annual visit to the electorate, and that was always a time for a round of visits to all and sundry. In particular old friends in the days of early struggles were not overlooked, and calls were made at many a wayside home for a grasp of the hand, a chat over a cup of tea, and an interchange of reminiscences of other days. Mrs. Seddon was a welcome visitor to every household, and was often approached by women with suggestions for the common good. In that way the telephone first went to Okarito, to give the southern women folk direct contact in emergency with a doctor. The wives of two settlers living some five miles apart by road, in a sparsely populated district, were granted a short-cut track reducing the distance to

half, so that they might more readily help each other in emergency. These are instances of the ever-ready willingness to help the settlers of the out of way places with conditions to improve their lot, and assist to aid the progress of the back country.

"Mr. Seddon played a very full part in his sojourn in New Zealand. First as pioneer miner and storekeeper, he passed on to local advocate and public man. Always a ready speaker, he began many a new movement, winning support where often strong opposition had first to be overcome. He was a painstaking worker, yet considerate for those about him. A fast friend and a loyal supporter where need demanded. The maintenance of the prestige of the country and its advancement were ever in his mind. A rare command of men where action was needed, and in emergency a quick thinker and prompt in action. Indeed, a man of many parts, whose qualities endeared him to all. Loyal himself, he received loyalty from his followers in return, and so held his place in undisturbed challenge to the close of a brilliant, busy career, which has left its mark on the country's methods of progress. Westland, in the first place, was fortunate in attracting Mr. Seddon to its territory, where so much experience and training fitted him for the higher destiny he was to fulfil. For that reason, and the memory of his great

personality, the name of Seddon will stand high always in the minds of Westlanders."

Reverting again to the opening of the year 1866, Old Westland with "King" Sale at the helm continued at an ever-increasing rate, to draw thousands of men to her now widely known goldfields, and most of these new arrivals at once proceeded to Lake Brunner, to where, as has been noted, a rush had set in towards the end of December, 1865. On their arrival there the field was pronounced a "duffer," and there was a violent demonstration against Albert Hunt, who had led the rush but had mysteriously disappeared as soon as his alleged claim was reached. This so infuriated the diggers that they wrecked a storekeeper's premises and divided his goods among themselves, holding that he was in league with Hunt and had promoted the rush for the purpose of selling his goods at exorbitant prices.

Having thus wreaked their vengeance on this unfortunate man they made preparations to return to the Grey, but this they found impossible for, owing to continuous rain, the creeks and rivers became flooded and the lake rose to an unheard of height. They were forced to climb trees and there remain without food until rescued by men in boats, who earned as much as £100 per day in so doing. Two hundred men who were marooned in a flax swamp without food and shelter were even

in a worse plight and when at length rescued were in a starving state. Floods were general throughout Westland at this particular time, due to the late melting of the snow on the ranges, and much damage was done at Hokitika. Many drownings were also reported and every day diggers lost their lives in attempting to cross the snow-fed mountain torrents.

At this time the beaches just north of Greymouth were being worked to great advantage; in shallow ground slightly above high water mark as high as 30 ounces to the paddock were obtained, while at Darkie's Terrace (Seven Mile), two hundred feet above sea level, extraordinarily rich wash was located which went from 12 to 20 ounces to the load. Further north Barrytown "broke out" and soon carried a large population; this field, too, proved remarkably rich, and so it went on until the whole of the beaches from West Wanganui in the north to Martin's Bay in the south were yielding their golden harvests.

The discovery of the metal royal north of the Grey River which, as has been mentioned, is the southern boundary of the Province of Nelson, caused many complications, and one in particular which the diggers greatly resented. This being that a miner's right issued by the Canterbury Provincial Council was of no use in the Province of Nelson, and vice versa; this meant that miners crossing the Grey

had to take out a second one to hold the ground they intended to work and this they strenuously objected to.

While fortunes were being made (and spent) in the Grey district, the southern fields were more than holding their own. Okarito was still booming and the *Bruce* continued to bring large parcels to Hokitika, over 5,000 ounces in one trip. Here diggers had discarded cradles and were sluicing. The Kanieri field also continued to yield sensationally, while Ross, the Waimea, Stafford, Goldsborough, and the Greenstone all contributed gold in undiminished quantities. As a matter of fact, almost everywhere the finding of the precious metal was reported, and daily new rushes set in.

At this juncture, Albert Hunt, who had so mysteriously disappeared after the Lake Brunner fiasco, again came into the picture. He applied for a prospector's claim on the Ohinemaka River, Bruce Bay, some nine miles inland. He stated he had discovered a very rich terrace there, where the wash was only from four to eight feet below the surface. On his application being granted by Warden Price at Okarito (from where, during the preceding twelve weeks, 30,000 ounces had been exported), his every movement was watched and when he set out for his newly-granted claim he was followed by hundreds of diggers all anxious to be in early on the new field. In a short time

Okarito was almost deserted and soon from four to five thousand men were on what we now know as Hunt's Beach. Here Warden Keogh set up his Court and a police camp was established, stores and hotels also being opened. Claims were pegged out along the beach, covering an area of over ten miles, and then, as at Lake Brunner, neither Hunt nor his claim could be found. He had made his get-away by sea, aided and abetted by a notoriety known as Black Sam, the owner of a cutter whose home port was Riverton. Meanwhile, men who had left good claims to hasten to Hunt's El Dorado found on their return that these had been occupied by others, and it is certain that Hunt, could he have been found, would never have led another rush. This, and as well for him, was his last appearance on the West Coast.

By this time Westland was becoming very much more settled, and more modern methods of mining were being adopted. Many extensive water races were in the course of construction, some of them being two or three miles in length. Kanieri led the way in these reforms, for there, as previously stated, many experienced miners were located, who worked their claims to the utmost advantage. Larnach, commenting on this, states: "There were five fire engines at work on Commissioner's Flat; and water was brought on to the terraces

behind the township from a distance of nine miles." In the Grey district, too, works of a permanent character were going on, and many of the so-called "worked out" claims were reopened, giving good results.

Then came Moonlight Creek, famous for its nuggets, the largest of which weighed 79 ounces, another being 78 ounces. Then two more were found, 47 and 44 ounces respectively, the latter being about the size and shape of a man's hand and very dark in colour. Shortly after this a rush set in to the Little Grey; this was brought about by statements anent this field which had appeared in the *Grey River Argus* and soon a considerable number of men were on the ground. At first very poor returns were obtained, and an indignation meeting was held by the diggers, who passed a resolution that the editor of the *Argus* should pay £100 to the Greymouth Hospital "as a public restitution for the misleading statements published in his paper." After events, however, justified the editor, for soon 1,000 men were doing well on the field so hastily pronounced a "duffer." Here nuggets were again in evidence, one parcel of over 300 ounces, bought by the Bank of New South Wales, being composed of nothing else. It was considered that this was the finest sample of gold yet won in Westland.

To the residents of Old Westland, who by this time numbered 25,000, the news of the murder of George Dobson by the infamous Burgess-Levy-Kelly-Sullivan gang of bush-rangers, came as a great shock. This unfortunate road engineer, who was a brother of Sir Arthur Dudley Dobson and employed by the Canterbury Provincial Council, was killed on the south bank of the Grey River, near the coal-mining centre which to-day bears his name, when on a tour of inspection. A concrete monument erected by the Provincial Council marks the spot where this inoffensive Government servant met his untimely end.

This tragedy occurred on May 28th (1866); and about the middle of June four men who had been gold mining on the Wakamarina diggings were also murdered when proceeding to Nelson. Shortly after this the gang in question were arrested on suspicion, and they had not been long in gaol before Sullivan turned Queen's evidence, and made a statement that they had killed the four miners mentioned, a man named Battle, and George Dobson. From Sullivan's confession it is certain they mistook Dobson for a gold buyer named Fox. Sullivan was reprieved and later shipped out of the country by the police. Burgess, Levy and Kelly were hanged.

George Dobson was buried in the Karoro cemetery, Greymouth, by Bishop Harper

(Christchurch), who even at this early date was conducting a series of services among the diggers, with headquarters at Hokitika. He rests beside Whitcombe, Townsend and Mitchelmore, men of his day and time, who, as has been shown, also passed on when on duty in Westland. It is of interest to state that Fox was drowned in the New River in 1875, and that he, too, rests in the Karoro cemetery, not far from George Dobson, the man who was killed in his stead.

The winter of 1866 was as good as that of the previous year was bad, and vessels were able to work the ports of Hokitika and Greymouth continuously, with the result that food supplies were plentiful and not nearly as dear. It was now generally considered that the goldfields would last for a number of years, and many diggers were being joined by their wives and families. With the advent of spring road construction commenced in earnest, and a tramway was opened to Kanieri. Then came telegraphic communication with Christchurch, and Westland was no longer completely isolated.

In October one of the greatest known rushes set in to the Buller district, where excellent ground had been discovered at the Inangahua, Charleston and Fox's River. The township of Westport, which had been neglected, became a busy shipping centre, 12,000 men arriving there

from Okarito, Hokitika and Greymouth in one month. And so this, the West Coast's record year, closed with gold being won almost everywhere in prodigious quantities, the grand total for the twelve months being no less than 560,220 ounces, valued at £2,170,589.

Chapter XIX

Hokitika Wonder City—Bully Hayes—Greymouth Crescent City — Gentleman George — Chinaman's Luck.

Dance Hall, Hokitika

In the year 1867 it was estimated that Old Westland had a population of 50,000, whereas but two years previously there were under 1,000 people on the whole of the West Coast, such is the lure of gold. By this time Hokitika was the wonder city of the Southern Hemisphere, so phenomenal had been its growth; and now, at the zenith of its greatness, it presented a picture unique in the history of the Dominion. Men from far-flung places of the world congregated in its streets and talked of gold, and nothing but gold, and as they talked a mounted escort would pass by—there had been a "wash up" at Ross, Kanieri, Waimea, or at some of the river or beach claims and another 10,000 ounces was being put aboard a vessel for export. Such a shipment, then valued at £40,000 —to-day at twice as much—caused no undue

excitement; it was a commonplace occurrence, just an incident in the daily routine.

At night, when the diggers working nearby returned to town, the scene almost baffled description, for then the streets were thronged with people, and the places of amusement, ablaze with light, came into their own. Then the hotels, the skittle alleys, and the gambling dens, where foregathered immaculately attired, soft-voiced spielers, adept at working a crooked roulette wheel, a crown and anchor outfit, or the elusive thimble and pea illusion, "Now you see it—and now you don't," were going at top, and diggers were simply throwing away their easily gotten gold.

The casinos, too, where the ladies *de ballet* displayed less of their charms than do sun-bathing girls of to-day, were most popular. In the beginning these "dancing girls" were attached to the hotels; later it was deemed necessary to add the following clause to the Licensing Act: "Whereas a practice exists in certain parts of the Colony of hiring women and young girls to dance in rooms or places where liquors are sold, any contract by which any females shall be hired to dance in any such room or place shall be null and void; any room or place in which females shall be so employed, or permitted, whether by contract or by a share of the produce of the sale of tickets, or in any way, shall be taken to be

a disorderly house. Penalty: first offence £20, second £50 and forfeiture."

Thus did the licensed houses of the day lose a great source of revenue, for Inspector Broham saw to it that the law was observed in this respect. The dancing girls were a passing phase in Old Westland's history; while money was plentiful they there remained; with the dwindling of gold returns they moved on—a semi-depleted goldfield they had no use for.

It was at this time, too, that Hokitika excelled itself as a shipping centre. During the previous year an ever-increasing number of ships had visited the port, but now they came (and regularly, too) in hundreds, it being on record, in fact shown as an illustration herein, that forty-one vessels of all nationalities, sizes, sorts and descriptions were actually in port on one day, and what is more, were being bustled to sea to make room for those in the offing and those due to arrive.

While on the subject of shipping it is of interest to note that the brig *Rona,* W. H. (Bully) Hayes, master, was at Hokitika on New Year's Day, 1867. Anent this, here is an extract from the *West Coast Times* of Saturday, December 29th, 1866: "Shipping Intelligence—Port of Hokitika: arrived *Rona,* 150 tons, W. H. Hayes, from Fiji Islands; passengers: J. Booth, S. Miller. Per *Rona,*

from Fiji Islands, 50,000 oranges, 50,000 limes, 1,000 cockatoos, 80 pigs, 200 pine-apples, 200 citrons, and a quantity of South Sea Island curiosities. Carey and Giles, agents." (In the commercial columns of the paper the cargo was advertised for sale by public auction.)

"The brig *Rona,*" continues the *Times,* "bound to this port, sailed from the island of Kanatava, one of the Fiji group, on the 16th inst, with light S.E. trades which failed her altogether when the parallel of 33 degrees south latitude was reached. Calms and light airs then prevailed for a few hours, when the breeze came out of the northward, and during the remainder of the passage kept light and variable. The North Island was not sighted, the first landfall being made in the vicinity of Fox's River on the 26th, where Captain Hayes landed, the brig in the meantime standing off and on the coast under canvas. After a few hours she was headed for Hokitika, and anchored in the roadstead on the morning of the 28th. It was not fated, however, that she should remain stationary, as shortly afterwards a smart breeze sprung up from the N.W., sending in a jumping sea, which set the *Rona* pitching to her anchor, and caused her, by a sudden jerk, to snap the chain at the hawse pipe. Sail was immediately made and the brig was kept under canvas until noon, when she fastened to the *Lioness* and

was towed inside. The *Rona* is partially loaded with South Sea Island produce. After the ship was moored Captain Hayes came ashore; he was dressed in white trousers, with a sash round his waist (in lieu of braces), a silk shirt, and a 'wide-awake hat.' He proceeded to the nearest hostelry, where he 'shouted' for all hands, afterwards making a tour of inspection of the city." Here he met many old friends from the Otago goldfields, he having four years previously kept a hotel at Fox's (Arrowtown), the story of his sojourn there being most interestingly told by Robert Gilkison in "Early Days of Central Otago," who states *inter alia*, that this bold bad buccaneer had only one ear, the other having been cut off in California for cheating at cards. Be this as it may, it is a matter of history that he sat in with a sky-the-limit poker school when in Hokitika and got cleaned up in no time. The *Rona* sailed next day.

Despite the fact that the population of Westland was cosmopolitan to a marked degree, it was a law abiding, nay a straight laced, community when compared with that of some goldfields, where it was necessary for every man to carry a revolver, and two-gun men were ever a picturesque (and deadly) menace. There was but little serious crime on the West Coast, a gang of Australian bushrangers certainly, but the vigilance of the police

soon drove them out of Westland, and into the hands of the Nelson authorities who, none the less alert, soon captured, convicted and hanged them.

During the opening months of this year (1867) the population of Greymouth, like that of Hokitika, had increased in an amazing manner, and the town was now known as the Crescent City for the reason that its places of business followed the waterfront and the natural curve of the river, making, especially at night when ablaze with light, a brave show indeed. Here W. H. Revell, in his official capacity as Resident Magistrate and Warden, was in charge of the district, while T. A. S. Kynnersley occupied the position of Commissioner, Resident Magistrate, and Warden of the Nelson goldfields with headquarters across the river at Cobden.

Both Provincial Governments had now instituted a roading system, and good progress was being made with the necessary construction works. The next progressive move was made by the Canterbury Provincial Council, who spent £1,000 in "protection" works: a series of piles nine feet long was driven along the bank of the river, the undertaking being known as the "Ninepins Contract," it being generally held by those who had seen the Grey in flood that the first "fresh" would carry the structure away; and sure enough, a little later the "protective works" went out to sea.

Throughout this year the various fields continued to yield in a satisfactory manner, 521,000 ounces being won; this was roughly 40,000 ounces less than the previous year, and it was now apparent that most of the "easy" gold had been obtained. So settled was Old Westland by 1868 that in July Greymouth was proclaimed a borough, Hokitika attaining a similar dignity one month later. In 1869 the population was steadily decreasing, and in consequence of this many fires took place, history repeating itself, for successive great conflagrations have ever been inevitable adjuncts to declining goldfields. These disastrous outbreaks, which occurred at Ross, Hokitika and Greymouth, did much damage and very large sums were paid by insurance companies. Perhaps the worst fire of all took place at the latter town, when three banks, three hotels, seven large stores and sundry shops and offices were destroyed.

At this time there were about 3,000 Chinese diggers throughout the fields, and the sons of the Flowery Land were far from popular. Though they were most excellent workers—industrious, honest and inoffensive —the Europeans would have none of them. Their objection was deep seated, and did not originate in the country. It commenced on the Australian goldfields, and when the great invasion from there occurred, and thousands

of men rushed Old Westland, it was natural that they should bring with them a code peculiar to the fields they had left, and that code did not permit of Chinamen being allowed on the diggings at all.

To illustrate the hatred of the Australian diggers towards the Chinese, it is interesting to note that at Lambing Flat—a very rich field in New South Wales—an anti-Chinese league was formed with the avowed intention of "driving the Chows out of the country"; and it is a matter of history that members of this body, headed by a band playing Rule Britannia, actually raided diggings worked by Chinamen, whose gold they stole after beating them most unmercifully and burning their huts down. As a result of this raid several were arrested and severely punished, which only intensified the feeling against the Confucians, which was at its height when Old Westland broke out.

Now on the West Coast goldfields there were several Lambing Flat hotels, and one so named at Blaketown, kept by an Australian named Horsington (who came from Lambing Flat), was headquarters of a clique known as the Tipperary Boys, who well and truly hated Chinamen. Here occurred an incident typical of the goldfields in their heyday. But before writing of this, meet Gentleman George (whose surname no man knew), an Englishman who

had been at Oxford and spoke with a decided accent. He was a lion of a man, well over six feet and built in proportion, who dearly loved a fight, and invariably went into action quoting Shakespeare. On the day in question, as a number of Chinamen were passing the Lambing Flat hotel on their way to the Greenstone diggings, Gentleman George made bold to politely enquire from the leader of the Tipperary Boys "who the sunburnt Irishmen were?"

The fight that followed was a classic. George went into action reciting Hamlet's "Soliloquy": "To be (bang), or not to be (bang, bang), that is the question (biff), whether 'tis nobler in the mind (bang, bang, bang), to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," etc., etc., etc., both men valiantly battling on, giving and taking severe punishment with the utmost fairness, until the police intervened, much to the disgust of the assembled crowd. Those were the days.

This "blue-eyed Briton" afterwards made a "pile" and became interested in an hotel, which he endeavoured to run on English lines. Now on the goldfields most of the diggers chewed tobacco, and in consequence cuspidors were very necessary articles of furniture. These he placed in every room and in great profusion in the bar; but his patrons would have none of them. He pleaded, then threatened, then

appealed from a health point of view—but in vain. At last came a brain wave—he had cards printed and placed everywhere, bearing this inscription:

> He who expectorates upon the floor
> cannot *expect to rate* as a gentleman.

This clever and original example of the subtle art of punning (backed no doubt by the fighting qualities of the man responsible) appealed to the diggers, and had the desired effect.

Reverting again to the Confucians of Old Westland, many of whom made a fortune, it was generally considered that their success was entirely due to what was known as "Chinaman's Luck," which most of the diggers held to be infallible. So great was this belief that the writer actually knew an old timer who, before attending a race meeting, always made a point of kissing a Chinaman for luck. This term we would to-day apply to those addicted to purchasing winning tickets in Tattersall's, or to backing at the psychological moment a horse that wins but one race in a lifetime and pays a record dividend—as a matter of fact, to those who "can't go wrong." But here is an incident which completely explodes the theory of infallibility, and shows how, when fickle fortune forgot to smile, the remains of the sons of the Flowery Land who died in Westland (and throughout New Zealand) were lost by shipwreck, a dire calamity

—the more remarkable because this tragedy is outstanding in the annals of British shipping history.

With regard to this, Confucians the world over pay into a fund to be utilized to defray the expense of conveying their remains to China, should they die prior to returning thereto. With the object of carrying out this essential obligation the powerful Chong Sing Tong Society (which was formed over 2,000 years ago) in 1900 collected the bones of their countrymen who had been buried in New Zealand, for the purpose of shipping them home and thus fulfilling the cardinal principles of their religious belief. To do so they chartered the *Ventnor,* a steamer of 6,500 tons, which left Wellington for Hong Kong on October 26th, 1902. She carried a cargo of coal and 499 Chinese bodies, which were insured for £5,490. The following day the *Ventnor* struck a rock south of Cape Egmont, and as she was leaking badly was headed for Auckland. The next morning a bulkhead gave way, and the vessel had to be abandoned suddenly, the captain and twelve of the crew being drowned. The bodies were never recovered.

Chapter XX

The Inangahua District—Reefton — Grey-Brunner Railway — Kumara — Moonlighters — End of Westland's Golden Era—Conclusion.

Provincial Seal

THE year 1870 marked a new phase in gold mining. This was brought about by the discovery of auriferous quartz reefs in the Inangahua district. Prior to this alluvial gold to the value of over £500,000 had been won, and it was when further prospecting was being carried out that the first reef was struck at Murray Creek. Here many famous mines were located, including the Wealth of Nations, Keep-it-Dark, Energetic, and Golden Fleece, all of which yielded fabulous returns. Two years later that intrepid explorer, P. Q. Caples (who has already been referred to in Chapter IX), located further reefs at Boatmans, he being the first to prospect this district. When it came to pegging off a claim Caples was most unfortunate in his selection, the area he took up proving almost worthless, while the holdings to the north and

south of him, the well-known Fiery Cross and Just-in-Time, yielded the most handsome returns for a long period of years.

Of this section of the story of the Golden West R. C. Reid says: "The discovery caused intense excitement throughout every part of the Coast, which soon extended to other parts of the Colony and overseas. Men of the greatest experience in quartz mining in Victoria and at the Thames in the North Island, wandered thitherwards. The town of Reefton was laid out and wonderful prices were quickly obtained for sections. The utmost difficulties had to be overcome in the opening up of the earliest mines, and in getting crushing machinery on to several of the claims. After a year or two good returns were obtained from three or four of the principal mines, and the field became fairly established. The population steadily increased, and all the signs of prosperity became manifest: large hotels and stores were erected, and the lucky owners of them coined money. Then the old, old story, often related of Sandhurst, Pleasant Creek, Inglewood, Gympie, Grahamstown, and other quartzopoles followed. The scrip mania set in, and every man and woman in the neighbourhood speculated to a greater or smaller extent. Crowds congregated every night, more particularly on Saturday nights, in the main street and not a sound was heard but scrip, scrip,

scrip, everywhere. What tales of luck, both good and bad, could be told of those days when the scrip epidemic was in full rage in Reefton.

"The temptation to speculate became positively irresistible, when it was no unusual occurrence to witness the most veritable 'new chum,' with possibly a better acquaintance with pewter quarts than golden quartz, converting a few five-pound notes into as many hundreds ere the sun had risen and set. Instances of this kind were not far to seek. A quarter-share in the once famous Hopeful claim changed hands for what is known in sporting circles as a 'pony' (£50), and a few months after the purchase the holder of the share was receiving dividends of hundreds of pounds every month. Again followed, as invariably happens, times of depression, and some of the self-same shares were shortly afterwards forfeited for a sixpenny call. And such has been the history of Reefton since its opening, subject to great fluctuation."

The reefs in the Inangahua district extend over a vast area of country, and gold is still steadily being won, the yield from 1877 to 1938 being 1,729,278 ounces valued at £7,397,291.

The year 1872 opened in a most disastrous manner, a tremendous flood taking place in the Grey River in February, which swept half

of the business portion of the town over the bar and carried away the protection works and wharf which had been constructed by the Borough Council, the then "port authority." Fortunately at this time Sir William Fox, then Premier, was visiting Westport, and on learning of the extensive damage came down post haste to Greymouth, where he authorized the building of a flood protection wall, from where now stands Cobden Bridge to Tainui Street, which, through the years, has saved the town from a similar disaster on many occasions.

The passing of the year 1873 marked the conclusion of Old Westland's first decade as a goldfield. During this time over 3,000,000 ounces valued at £12,000,000 were exported from the West Coast, and the field was still producing at the rate of 200,000 ounces annually.

On December 1st, 1873, Westland was declared a separate province; this, then, was the year of its emancipation. The election of a Superintendent and members was held amidst scenes of great enthusiasm and general rejoicing in the January following, details of which have been noted on page 218.

The formal opening of the Grey-Brunner Railway was carried out by His Honour the Superintendent of the Province, J. A. Bonar, on April 15th, 1876. This was indeed a red letter day in the history of the province, for

it marked the completion of the first section of the network which now covers Westland, and links up with the South Island Main Trunk system at Rolleston, some 14 miles from Christchurch.

Originally this line was known as the "serpentine railway" on account of the way it twisted and turned. As a matter of fact, there were many "old man" stumps en route, and these were not removed but gone round, the result being innumerable curves of very doubtful radius. This railway was constructed primarily for the purpose of conveying coal from the Brunner mine (which after a varied and chequered career had been taken over by Messrs. Martin Kennedy) to Greymouth. Here permanent harbour works were being constructed, to enable coal to be exported in sufficient quantities to compete with importations from Newcastle, N.S.W. To further assist in the good work Messrs. Kennedy purchased a fleet of small vessels and a number of hulks, thus establishing depots at all the principal ports of the Colony. This ambitious project met with instantaneous success and the Brunner mine became the largest producer of coal in the Dominion. It is of importance to state that harbour improvements at Greymouth were carried out by the Borough Council until 1884, when the Greymouth Harbour Board came into being.

Meanwhile Brunnerton had become a thriving centre, other mines having been opened in the vicinity, many men finding employment there. Steadily increasing in importance, Westland's principal coal-producing centre was proclaimed a borough in 1887. Nine years later, in 1896, there occurred the terrible disaster by which 65 men and boys were entombed. . . . .

Throughout the years the fields continued to grow in importance, and many new mines were developed in the Grey-Inangahua districts. In 1901 the State Mines came into existence, and 20 years later certain areas were worked by the co-operative system. The total output from the two districts, from the inception of the Brunner mine in 1864 to 1937, is as follows: Greymouth 16,554,417 tons, Reefton 1,012,406 tons; grand total 17,566,823 tons.

Apart from the opening of the Grey-Brunner Railway, the year 1876 is also important as it marks the last big gold rush staged in Old Westland; for then Kumara, birthplace of the New Zealand Liberal Party, came into existence. True, some years later, in 1882, a rush took place to the township we now know as Rimu, and a little later Seddon's Terrace was the scene of some activity. On both fields good gold was obtained, and though highly payable they did not approach in magnitude

the discoveries which preceded them. Kumara, on the other hand, was for years the most prosperous alluvial goldfield in the Colony.

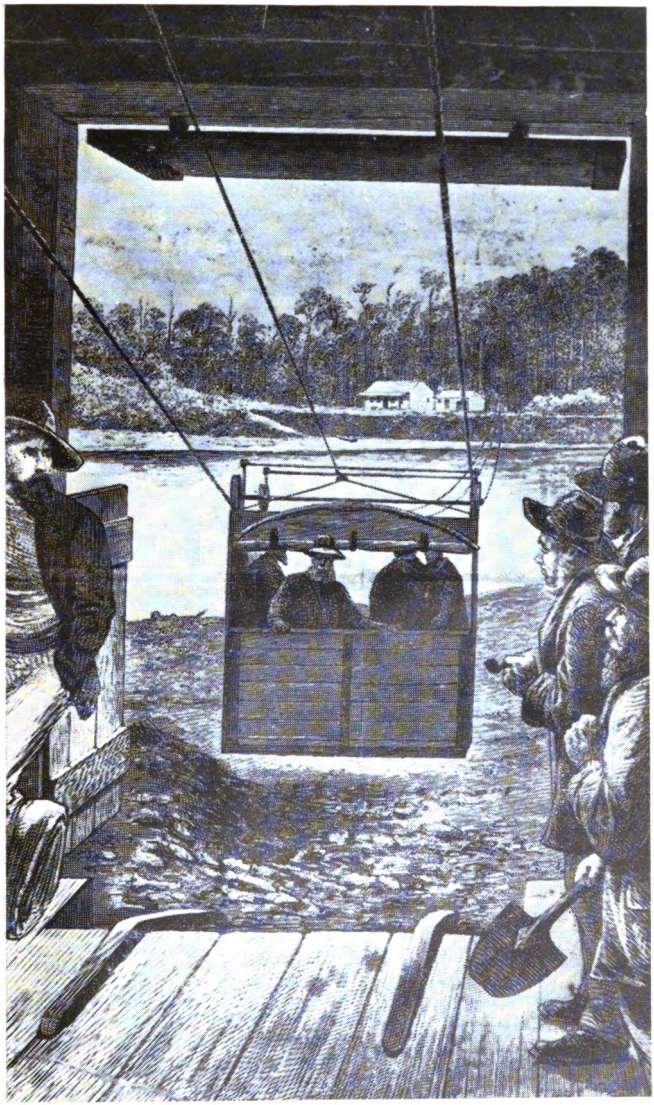
Of this famous goldmining centre, W. J. M. Larnach ("Handbook of New Zealand Mines, 1887") says: "The township of Kumara with its broad, quiet streets, gives little idea of a busy digging town, but the mining population is to be found a mile or two away at Dillman's Town, and the operations are carried on in the neighbourhood of that centre, and at Larrikins, Dunedin Flat, and other localities thereabout. Before Kumara became a goldfield, 1,000 acres of land had been set aside as an Education Reserve, and a large part of the town was built thereon, a considerable revenue being derived from rents and charges against mining privileges granted over the reserve. It was not long, however, before the rents, which in the heyday of the first excitement were readily offered for building leases, began to prove too onerous for the quieter course of business which supervened, and much agitation and negotiation followed for the purpose of procuring a modification of the terms on which the leases were held. The question was at length set at rest by the Kumara Education Reserve Act of 1879, which brought the area in question under the operation of the mining laws and regulations, many of the leaseholds being converted into freeholds."

It is of historical importance to note that Kumara was not discovered as the result of intensive prospecting—but more by accident than design, for when a party of would-be "moonlighters" were excavating before putting in the necessary foundations for an illicit whisky still they discovered highly payable wash dirt, and at once abandoned the venture in hand for the more profitable (and lawful) occupation of gold digging. This romantic occurrence took place on the south bank of the Taramakau River, not far from where all that remains of the once prosperous Dillman's Town now stands. It was naturally a secluded spot—far from the madding crowd removed, and here the fortunate discoverers opened up a claim, which they hoped to work quietly and thus avoid the inevitable rush to the new El Dorado.

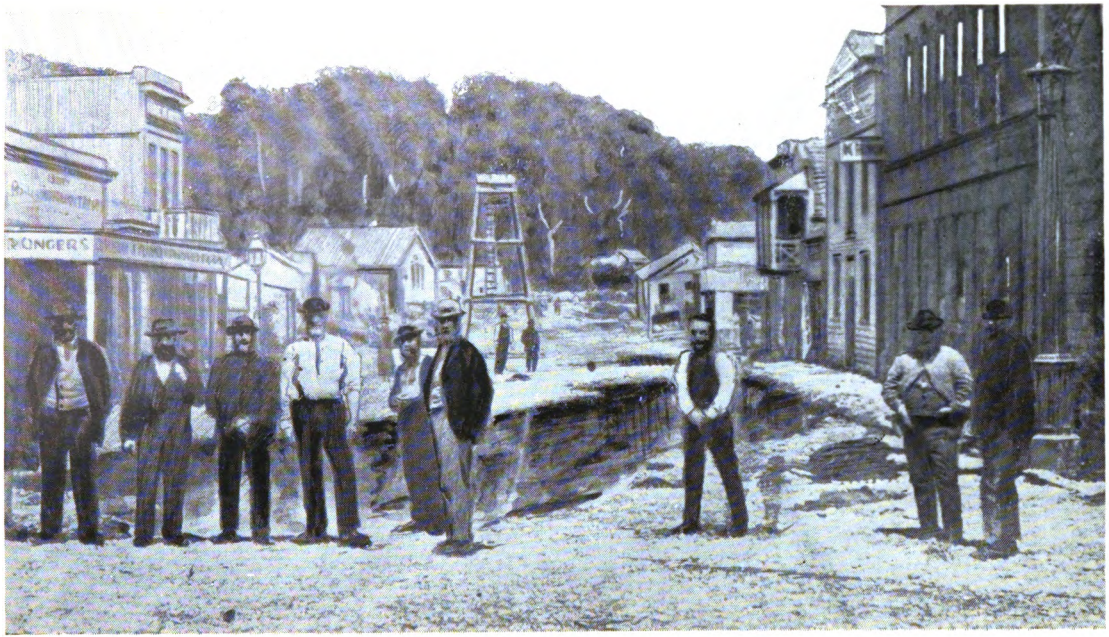
But, alas, they were not to remain long in seclusion, for a prospector travelling along the Taramakau saw them engaged in developing their claim, and actually overheard discussions pertaining to its richness. Losing no time, he set out for Stafford Town, the then centre of a highly productive field. Here resided Richard John Seddon, at this time a mining advocate and storekeeper, who was informed of the incident under discussion, and in due course he pegged out, applied for, and was granted a claim at the new diggings.

Following this about 4,000 men thronged the field, which was situated midway between Hokitika and Greymouth, and there was intense competition between the merchants of the two towns anent the supplying of necessary requisites for the establishment of a new mining centre. Hokitika already had a road constructed to the new field, and Greymouth a tramway to Paroa, some seven or eight miles away. Apart from this the northern merchants had to solve the problem of crossing the Taramakau River, a stupendous obstacle. But where there's a will there's a way (those old timers were seldom beaten), and in no time a one-horse tram was running from Paroa to the northern bank of the Taramakau, which was crossed by means of a "bird-cage," i.e. a box slung on wire, with pulleys running on an overhead wire rope, and propelled by means of steam winches. By this ingenious method passengers and goods were quickly conveyed to the southern bank, from where a tramway had been constructed through the heart of the forest to Kumara.

Discussing Old Westland's last major rush, "Waratah," in "Tales of the Golden West," states, *inter alia*: "Before long the news of the discovery got round, and a proper rush set in, and the silent forest of majestic trees and tangle of undergrowth were replaced by a mining township. Seddon being camped on



The Cage, Taramakau.



Tainui Street, Greymouth, 1866.

the spot took a leading part in the laying out of the town, and he tells how the founders took Melbourne with its wide streets and squares as their model. It was thus that the important town of Kumara, like the proverbial mushroom, sprang into existence, 'a city set upon a hill,' with suitable sludge channels leading to the river and plenty of water laid on. Many hotels, stores, banks, theatres and business places started up as if by magic, lining each side of Main Street (the old main road), as well as both sides of the fine broad street running at right angles to Main Street, towards Dillman's Town, and mapped as Seddon Street, in honour of one of its founders."

The township at its inception was duly christened with the usual formalities by the Superintendent of the Province, the Honourable J. A. Bonar, Esq., and, rapidly developing, was proclaimed a borough in 1877, with, as has been noted, Richard John Seddon as its first Mayor. After the first stampede it quickly settled down, and with Government assistance many water races were constructed, which completely commanded the gold-bearing areas, the result being that the field had a long life, and for a number of years enjoyed great prosperity.

Although Kumara staged Old Westland's last spectacular stampede and, in addition, marked the end of what is known as its golden

era, it must not be assumed that the Province as a gold producer then petered out. Far from it. Here are some startling official figures, supplied by the Mines Department, which need no explanation: Total amount of gold won in Westland (1864-1938), 6,644,601 ounces, valued at £25,941,735; average value produced over 75 years, £359,223 per annum, which means that gold to the value of almost £1,000 has been won each and every day the field has been in existence. Westland will continue to produce the metal royal for many, many years. The confidence of its pioneer legislators when they adopted the prophetic motto adorning the provincial seal, "Et mea messis erit" ("And my harvest is to come"), has been fully justified. Even to-day the deeper leads have not been tapped—the best is yet to be.

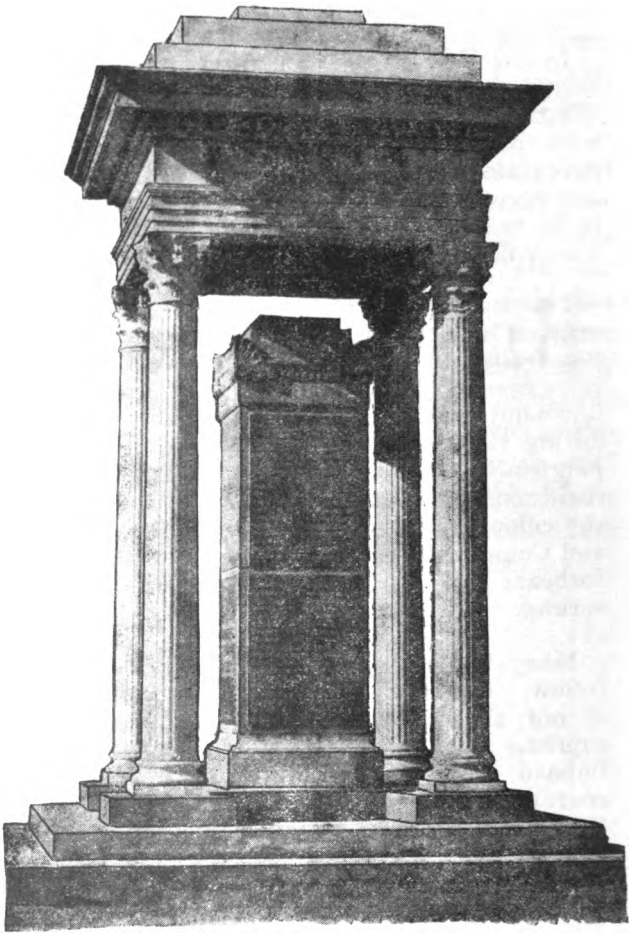
L'envoi

In the course of this unpretentious story, many of the wonderful achievements of Old Westland's Pioneers have been noted—noted with pardonable pride and a deep sense of thankfulness and responsibility. For did they not bequeath a goodly heritage, a sacred trust to be held for all time, and applied for those who will later people the Province?

Yet, magnificent as is this material inheritance, it pales into utter insignificance when we realise that in passing on the Pioneers left even a more priceless legacy — their unconquerable spirit. This was made manifest during the years of the South African campaign and the Great War, when their sons, and their sons' sons, and daughters too, flocked to the colours, and went forth to fight for King and Country, to the everlasting glory of their forbears and the Province from which they sprung.

Many laid down their lives. Their names follow. This story would be incomplete did it not chronicle them, for in making the supreme sacrifice, they died, true to tradition, imbued with the deathless spirit of those courageous men and women who pioneered Old Westland.

1939. Again the war drums throb their call. The Empire fights for life and liberty—men of Westland nobly respond—the pioneer spirit marches onward—upward to the stars.

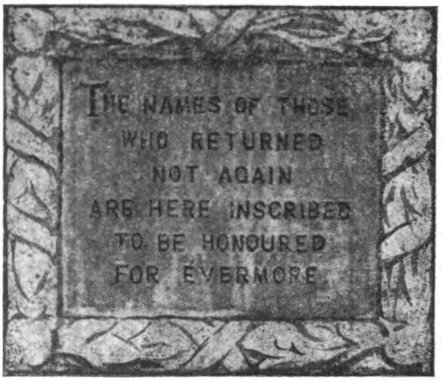


The Cenotaph, Hokitika

The Spirit of the Pioneers

Westland's Roll of Honour

Panel from Greymouth Cenotaph



Panel from Greymouth Cenotaph

The Great War
1914-1918

Abbot, W.
Aicken, W. M.
Anderson, J.
Anderson, W.
Andrews, H. G.
Andrews, J.
Appleton, L.
Arnold, L. J.
Arnold, R.
Atkins, A. A.
Austin, S.
Avent, F. R.
Backman, O.
Baird, A.
Balston, H. L.
Banks, H. D.
Barton, F. A. J.
Barry, G.
Beaman, J. T.
Bell, T.
Berendt, G. P.
Black, H.
Blackmore, E.
Boland, F.
Bonar, A. J. M.
Bonar, H. J.

Bowman, J.
Breeze, G. P.
Breeze, J. J.
Brislane, F. E.
Brown, A.
Brown, C. H. T.
Brown, E.
Brown, F.
Brown, J.
Brown, J. R.
Brown, R.
Brown, S.
Brown, S. G.
Bryant, F. C.
Burnard, E. M.
Burroughs, J.
Burrowes, W.
Byrne, C. A.
Byrne, J.
Byrne, J. F.
Byrne, V. G.
Cahill, H. C.
Cairnie, G. J. B.
Calder, H.
Caliari, J. J.
Carmine, F.
Castle, E. E.
Chalk, C. S.
Chilman, R.
Clarke, D.
Clements, P.
Cleere, R.
Clough, F. O.
Coady, E. P.
Cochrane, A. D.
Cochrane, E. G.
Colton, J. P.
Comport, A.
Comport, H. S.
Comport, W. C.
Condon, W. F.
Cooper, A.
Corcoran, W. P.
Corkhill, C.
Corrie, H. W.
Cottle, G.
Coumbe, F.
Coumbe, L. J.
Cribb, C. W. E.
Crimmins, J. P.
Cullen, O. P.
Cummings, W.
Cunningham, C.
Cunningham, W.
Currie, R. H.
Curtis, H. E.
Dale, A. E.
Dann, J.
Davey, J. M.
Davern, T.
Dawson, J. A.
De Bakker, H.
Debenham, C.
Debenham, H. A. E.
Debenham, H. E.
Dee, J. P.
Delaney, M. P.
Denston, G. H.
Devaney, T. P.
Doyle, W. J.
Dryberg, W.
Eggeling, H.
Eisfelder, W. F.
Elcock, C.

Ellison, J.
Erickson, J.
Evenden, W.
Ewart, S. J.
Excell, A.
Ferguson, H. B.
Ferguson, W.
Firth, P.
Fitzpatrick, M. B.
Fitzsimmons, W.
Fleming, F. J.
Foote, W. E.
Ford, S. R.
Foster, F.
Foster, G.
Foster, W.
Frame, B.
Freebairn, J.
Freitas, D.
Fricker, B.
Frickleton, W.
Furness, L. J.
Garland, A.
Garland, A. G.
Garth, S. E.
Garvin, T. J.
Gaylor, H. C. D.
Geaney, D. P.
Gibb, R. J.
Gibbs, C. C.
Gibson, McK.
Gillingham, R. A.
Gills, C.
Gleeson, H.
Godfrey, J.
Good, A. H.
Goyen, R.
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Growcott, H.
Gunn, C.
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Hall, G.
Hamilton, J.
Hands, B.
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Harper, W.
Harrison, E. E.
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Hogg, W.
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Honey, W. R.
Howland, L. G.
Hughes, L. M.
Humphries, T. J.
Ingram, E. A.

Irving, J.
Irwin, A.
Isdell, C. C.
Isdell, Helena (Nurse)
Jacobs, J.
Jamieson, M. (Nurse)
Johnsen, H.
Johnston, J. E.
Johnstone, W. E.
Jones, E. J.
Jolly, J.
Karnbach, C.
Katau, K.
Katau, W.
Kearns, T.
Kelly, S. T.
Kenyon, B. D.
Kettelty, W.
Kilkenny, M. H.
Kinsella, J.
Kjaer, J. A.
Knyvett, V.
Kortegast, H. S.
Laloli, J. H.
Langredge, H.
Langredge, T.
Limpus, P.
Lind, J.
Lindbom, A. W.
Lindsay, D. J.
Lindsay, W.
Love, J. P.
Lynch, T.
Mackay, D. E.
Mackle, J.
Mackley, O.
Mallinson, P. J.
Mansfield, W. H.
Manson, S.
Marsh, H. C.
Martin, P. F.
Masciorini, W.
Mason, H.
Mattson, L.
Mattson, J. A.
Messenger, W. G.
Millar, A.
Millington, R.
Mills, P.
Monaghan, J.
Montagu, E. C. D.
Moore, G. W.
Moriarty, J.
Moriarty, T.
Muir, A.
Mullins, M. F.
Mund, C.
Murfitt, E.
Murphy, J. P.
Mustard, W. P.
McAlister, G.
McArthur, P.
McClennand, W.
McCracken, C. A.
McGinley, J. C.
McGuire, E.
McGurk, W.
McIlroy, A.
McIlroy, G. T.
McIntosh, D.
McIntosh, R.
McIntyre, A. T.
McIntyre, F.
McKain, T.

McKenzie, G.
McKenzie, H. G.
McLagan, J.
McLaughlin, H.
McLaughlin, J.
McLaughlin, P.
McLean, T.
McMillan, J. H.
McMillan, R. A.
McNeill, J.
McNicol, A.
McQueen, R. H.
Nancarrow, V. F.
Neilson, E.
Neilson, J.
Neilson, V. F.
Nelson, C.
Ninnes, A. E.
Noble, C. C.
Nolan, P.
Noonan, J. P.
O'Connor, J.
O'Donnell, J.
Ogilvie, G.
Okey, A. J.
Okey, J.
Olsen, A. J.
Orr, H. C.
Pacey, C. R.
Park, W.
Pascoe, M.
Paul, C. H.
Payn, J.
Peake, W.
Peters, W.
Phillips, H.
Polglase, J.
Pool, C.
Potts, J. W.
Poulter, G. J. S.
Preston, W.
Priest, E. J.
Priest, P. C.
Priest, P. T. E.
Pullar, J.
Queatley, T.
Ramsay, R. C.
Rasmussen, L. C. M.
Reeves, R. J.
Reid, W. M.
Richards, C.
Richards, R.
Ring, L. G.
Robbie, R.
Roberts, E.
Rochford, W.
Rose, C.
Rose, F.
Ross, F.
Rostrom, I.
Rouse, R. J.
Rudkin, E. E.
Rudkin, E. R.
Rudkin, G. N.
Rundle, W. A.
Ryan, F.
Ryan, J.
Ryan, W. M.
Ryan, W.
Saunders, J. L.
Scott, J.
Seddon, R. J. S.
Sellars, A.
Sellars, N.

Senior, H.
Shand, D. L.
Shannon, E. A.
Shaw, W.
Shearer, C. H.
Sheary, J. E.
Sheldon, P.
Shirley, J. M.
Smee, F. F.
Smith, A. H.
Smith, A. L.
Smith, D.
Smith, G.
Sotheran, O.
Spence, R.
Spencer, D. W.
Spencer, T.
Steel, J.
Stevenson, T. J.
Stokes, A. J.
Sutherland, H.
Swatton, A.
Talbot, A. E.
Tawhai, H. T.
Tennent, R.
Thomas, R. H.
Thomas, W. E.
Thompson, J.
Thorpe, W. H. A.
Tomlinson, W. F.
Trouland, T. D. T.
Vocasovich, T.
Waghorn, F. G.
Wallace, G. H.
Wallace, J. G.
Wallace, T.
Walsh, T.
Walmsley, G.
Ward, C. K.
Warren, J.
Watters, A.
Watts, E. J.
Watton, A. S.
Watson, A.
Watson, J. R.
Waugh, J.
Weenick, H.
Weenick, R. F.
Wells, J.
White, D.
White, J.
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White, W.
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Whitmore, H.
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Willis, S. R.
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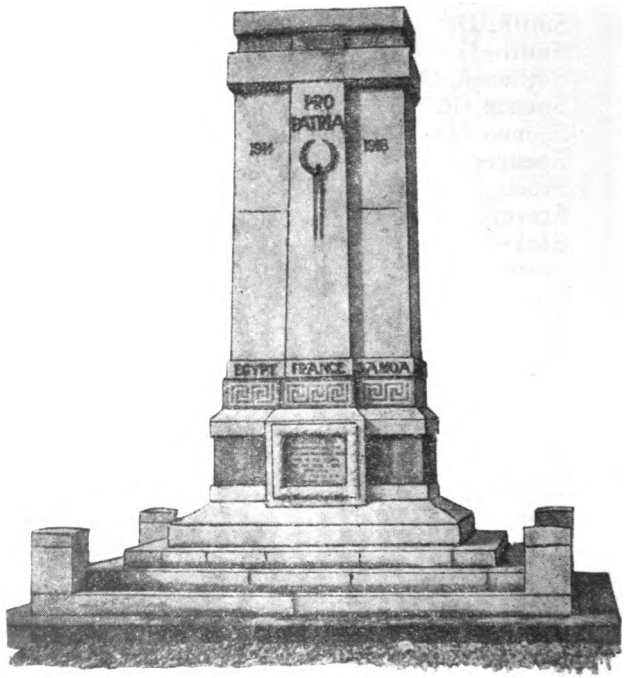
Wilson, A. E.
Wilson, A. E.
Wilson, A. G.
Wilson, D. J.
Wilson, J. G.
Winchester, T. B.
Witting, C. W.
Woolhouse, G. M.
Woolhouse, J.
Wootten, H. C.
Wootten, W. C.
Wroblfski, F.

Wroblfski, W.
Wylde, A. T.
Young, A.
Ziegler, J. L.

South African War (1899-1902)

Allen, J. K.
Bottom, O.
Martin, T.
Watters, W. P.
Williams, H. G.



The Greymouth Cenotaph

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